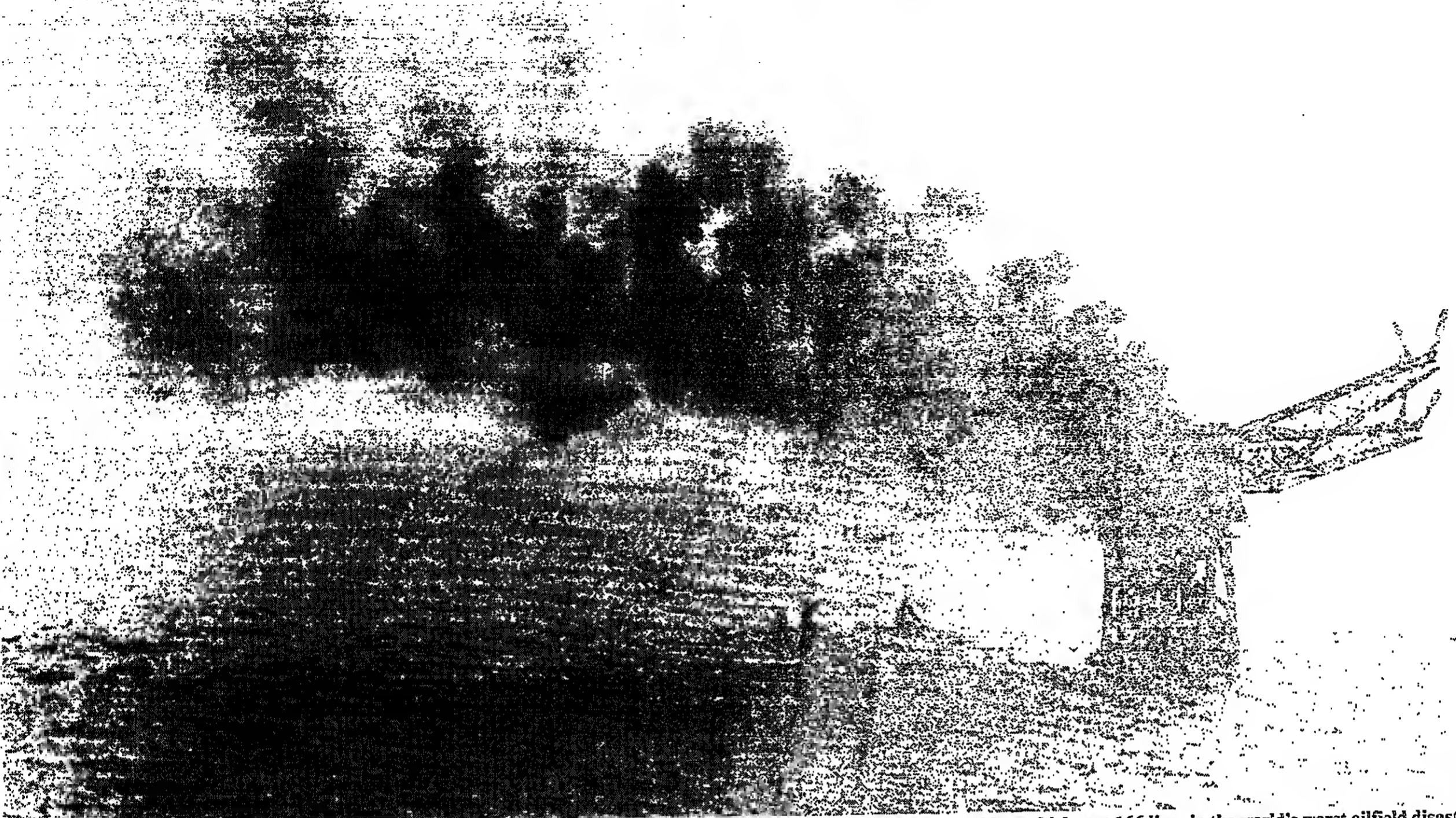


July 8 1988

LAST WEEK'S AVERAGE DAILY SALE 443,000 No 63,128

FRIDAY JULY 8 1988

Smoking North Sea wreck where 166 perished



Thick smoke belching from the torn skeleton of the Piper Alpha platform yesterday as fires continued to rage after the blast which cost 166 lives in the world's worst oilfield disaster.

Gas build-up theory in worst oil disaster

By David Sapsted, Andrew Morgan and Ruth Gledhill

A build-up of lethal gas, odourless and un-noticed, was believed last night to have triggered the explosion which blew apart the Piper Alpha oil production platform in the North Sea, leaving 166 men dead, including three rescuers. The Government ordered an inquiry into the tragedy, the world's worst oilfield disaster. Last night investigators from the Department of Energy and other oil experts were standing by to board the wrecked platform as soon as the fire, which sent flames 700 ft into the sky and was seen 60 miles away, is under control. The inquiry will centre on the cause of the gas leak in the rig's 'C' module which resulted in the two huge blasts and subsequent fires which, yesterday, left only a quarter of the platform still standing above water. The 'C' module is a self-contained gas compression chamber which is built in one piece and lifted onto the platform to fit like a jig-saw into the final construction. Gas tapped from the oil wells is compressed in the 'C' module before either being sent ashore or into the oil reservoir to maintain pressure. As the investigation began into the causes, the rescue services were baffled by the delay between the first explosion at 9.31pm on Wednesday and the first call for help from a supply vessel at 9.58pm. Mr Eoin Kerr, a radio maritime officer at Wick said: "About four minutes later a call came through from Piper Alpha saying that there was a fire in the radio room. It sounded as though the situation on the rig was pretty horrendous." The last message he heard from the unidentified radio-man was: "We're abandoning the rig. Jesus Christ, we've got to get out of here. There's no more time, we've got to get out." The extensive sea and air search, which involved 45 ships, eight helicopters and an RAF Nimrod command post will continue today in the 20-mile exclusion zone imposed around the rig, 120 miles north-east of Aberdeen. Mr Alistair Lynn, Grampian Chief Constable, last night admitted, however, that there was practically no hope of finding more than the 66 survivors accounted for. Three of the 166 still missing last night were seamen who went to the rescue of oilmen trapped on the blazing rig on Wednesday. All survivors were treated at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and 23 were still there last night, most suffering from burns. Two were in a serious condition. Scores of workers on Piper Alpha had tried to escape from the stricken platform during 20 terrifying minutes. The Queen said in her message of sympathy: "I was shocked to hear of the dreadful disaster which befell the Piper Alpha platform last night. My heartfelt sympathy goes out to the injured and bereaved. I should also like to express my admiration for the gallant efforts of the firefighting, rescue and medical services in preventing even greater loss of life." Disaster timetable... 2 Survivors' stories... 3 Parliament... 10 Making rigs safer... 12 Leading article... 13 Graphic... 20 between the first and the last explosion, which finally tore it apart. Rescuers aboard the support vessel, Tharos, and other ships near by spoke of oilmen waving frantically from the helipad and other parts of the platform before the final blast "just blew them away". Mr Bill Elder, a rigger from Kirkcaldy, Fife, who was on the Tharos, said: "It was horrifying and sickening. We saw 10 men waving from the helipad but there was nothing we could do to help them before there was another huge explosion. That was the last we saw of them." The first of the explosions occurred shortly after 9.30 pm, when at least half of the 232, mainly British, crew on board were resting in the rig's multi-storey accommodation block, which was demolished in the explosion. Mr John Brading, Occidental's UK chairman, said: "It would appear that the first explosion occurred due to an escape of gas in the 'C' module. A series of explosions and fires quickly followed. "Eight vessels in the immediate vicinity of Piper rendered assistance in rescue and fire fighting. "The damage to the platform is obviously extensive and includes the complete destruction of three of the four major plant modules housing the oil and gas separation facilities, gas condensate separation, gas compression, power generation, utilities and accommodation." As fire broke out followed by another large blast and a succession of smaller ones, men dove into the sea 50 ft below or scrambled down



An exhausted survivor helped by Loadmaster Bob Pountney from an RAF helicopter at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

Survivors' leap into darkness

By Staff Reporters

A survivor told yesterday how he leapt 70 feet without knowing what was beneath him after being a choice of "stay and get toasted or jump and chance it in the water". Mr Dave Lambert, aged 38, of Thornaby, Cleveland, who was in the water for several hours before being rescued, said he had looked for an escape route through all four doors of the area he was in, but that each had become engulfed by flames. "I thought I was dead. I thought I had had it. All of a sudden the floor opened up - the deck just collapsed," he said. "The cabin slid forward and a hole appeared so we just made for that. We just had to jump. We couldn't see whether there was water below us or not. It must have been 60 or 70 feet. We didn't know what was there, it could have been another deck. It was just a matter of having to do something. "It was stay and get toasted or jump and chance it in the water. It was Hobson's Choice. There was another lad with me - I don't know who he was but I know he was all right. We both got separated in the water but I saw him getting picked up." Mr Lambert said the time between the explosions and

Continued on page 20, col 5

Exam results

Degrees awarded by Southampton University will be published tomorrow. Trinity Bar results and Oxford class lists appear today. Page 24

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NEWS ROUNDUP

Child doctors sued

Legal action against Dr Marietta Higgs and Dr Geoffrey Wyatt, the two consultant paediatricians at the centre of the Cleveland child sexual abuse crisis, was launched yesterday on behalf of a Middlesbrough couple and their three daughters. The writs claim aggravated damages and also allege that the children were sexually assaulted by the doctors. Page 3

New curbs on councils

Mr Nicholas Ridley, Secretary of State for the Environment, last night surprised MPs with a change of policy in the run-up to the introduction of the community charge. He said the Government would in future control the amounts councils borrow rather than concentrate on their expenditure. Page 4

Phone freeze

British Telecom is to freeze most of its charges till August next year after "tough negotiations" with OfTel, the watchdog body. Charges for the elderly and the disabled will be cheaper. Page 4

Iran bares its grief on air deaths

From Nicholas Beeston Tehran Thousands of Iranian mourners chanting anti-American slogans marched through the streets of central Tehran yesterday, parading the coffins of 72 victims of the Airbus disaster. In the first large scale display of grief and anger since Sunday's missile attack on the

Explosive mix

jet, the crowds assembled on the hot and dusty Imam Khomeini street in front of the Parliament building where the coffins, draped in Iranian flags and flanked by bouquets of gladioli, were displayed. Only a few thousand marchers and spectators turned up, a far cry from the heyday of the revolution when several hundred thousand zealots would spontaneously demonstrate. Page 7

Solicitor jailed in Brink's-Mat case

By Michael Horsnell A London solicitor who acted as "Chancellor of the Exchequer" in an £18 million Brink's-Mat gold bullion laundering operation was sent to prison yesterday for 12 years. Michael Reiton, aged 50, of Chase Farm, Haslemere, Surrey, was found guilty of conspiring to handle proceeds of the record 1983 robbery on a majority verdict at the Central Criminal Court and later was described by Judge Richard Lowry QC as a "rich parasite". The jury, which deliberated for five days, went on unanimously to convict Mrs Kathleen McAvoy, aged 40, of Southborough Lane, Bromley, Kent, for conspiring to handle stolen goods. Her husband, Michael, is serving 25 years for his part in the robbery at the Brink's-Mat warehouse near Heathrow Airport. She received 18 months imprisonment, suspended for two years.

McAvoy's first wife - who will both face a retrial.

The prosecution alleged that all defendants were involved in the conversion of £7.5 million proceeds from the robbery into an £18 million property empire. The money was smuggled abroad, then secretly brought back to Britain. Reiton, a solicitor who worked for the Police Federation, had by the time of his arrest sold his practice to concentrate on property dealing.

This cutlery book has taken 86 years to write

It was in 1902 that my grandfather first started to design and produce his own quality silver-plated and stainless steel cutlery. He also decided that the cutlery was going to bear his name. Later my father continued this tradition and the range and company grew. 86 years later, I'm proud to say that our cutlery graces the tables of some of Britain's most famous homes. The family tradition and guarantee continues and Arthur Price of England enjoys an unrivalled reputation throughout the world for producing the finest quality cutlery. Our new full colour Sheffield Cutlery Album portrays our entire range. Page after page of the finest cutlery you can buy. Send me for your free copy and a very special £10 voucher. We think you'll find looking through our book time well spent - after all it's taken us 86 years to write it. John Price Chairman, Arthur Price of England.

Arthur Price of England Please send me a Free full colour brochure, and a list of appointed stockists where I can use my special £10 voucher. Post to: Arthur Price of England, FREEPOST, Britannia Way, Letchford, Leics. LE15 9UR (NO STAMP NEEDED) TT 10 NAME ADDRESS POST CODE Cutlery with a Personal Guarantee

North Sea disaster survivor: 'There was only one thing to do. I dived about 50 ft, totally

Six words that launched huge rescue operation

One of the largest rescue operations ever seen in the North Sea began on Wednesday at 9.58pm when the Aberdeen coastguard received a mayday call from an oil rig support vessel, the Lowland Cavalier. The message was short: "An explosion on the Piper Alpha".

The mayday generated a massive response over the next two hours as further details of the disaster emerged. In all there were 12 helicopters, a Nimrod search and rescue maritime patrol aircraft, six warships, a Royal Navy fishery protection vessel and an assortment of oil rig and coastguard vessels and commercial helicopters.

The involvement of the warships from the Nato Standing Naval Force Atlantic was a unique aspect of the rescue operation.

The night log in the operations room of the RAF-manned Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Pitreavie at Dumfries, which is also the headquarters for the Royal Navy's Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland, details the

development of the operation through the night, culminating with the arrival early on Thursday morning of an American admiral to take charge of the ships gathered around the burning oil installation.

9.31pm: The first of two massive explosions on Piper Alpha. A mayday call may have been made but it is not received by the nearest coastguard at Aberdeen.

9.58pm: A mayday call from the Lowland Cavalier is picked up by the Aberdeen coastguard on the international distress frequency, 2182 medium wave. The message is short: "Explosion at Piper Alpha". A full alert is mounted.

10.02pm: The rescue centre at Pitreavie receives a request for help.

10.05pm: Maritime radio officer at British telecom station at Wick, Highland, in direct radio contact with Piper Alpha.

10.10pm: First survivors arrive on board a

support vessel, MSV Tharos, which is later forced to pull back to a mile from the blazing platform. Injured receive emergency treatment on board the vessel, which has hospital accommodation for 22 as well as fire-fighting equipment.

10.13pm: RAF Sea King helicopter at RAF Boulmer on the Northumberland coast is scrambled.

10.17pm: HMS Gannet, Royal Navy shore base at Prestwick, Ayrshire, and home of a squadron of Sea Kings is alerted. One Sea King picks up an Aberdeen medical team and flies to the Tharos.

10.19pm: RAF Nimrod based at Kinloss, Grampian, is scrambled to provide overhead surveillance and co-ordinate helicopters.

10.22pm: An RAF Sea King returning to RAF Lossiemouth, Grampian, is ordered to refuel and fly out to the disaster scene.

10.37pm: Royal Navy Sea King from Prestwick, Strathclyde, is told to fly to Lossiemouth.

10.45pm: Shetland coastguard tells Pitreavie it has a helicopter airborne from Sumburgh.

10.50pm: A second RAF Sea King from Lossiemouth is airborne.

11.20pm: The Nimrod arrives over Piper Alpha and reports that the platform is "totally on fire from sea level to the top" (310ft). The pilot also reports there is a semi-submersible vessel (that was Tharos) 300 yards from the inferno. An RAF Sea King arrives at Lossiemouth from Leconfield, Humberstone, to refuel and be held in reserve.

11.35pm: First rescue helicopter, piloted by Flight Lieutenant Stephen Hodgson from RAF Lossiemouth arrives but is unable to get near the platform because of the heat. It later helped ferry injured men to hospital in Aberdeen from the Tharos.

12am: Vice-Admiral Jock Slater, Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland and also Nato Commander North Atlantic at Pitreavie, after reviewing the situation with his staff, sends a

signal to Rear-Admiral John Scott Redd, American commander of the six-warship Nato Standing Naval Force Atlantic which at that moment was steaming from Norway towards Portsmouth for a routine maintenance period.

The Nato naval force was then 180 miles south of Piper Alpha. The signal from Vice-Admiral Slater said: "Proceed with all dispatch. Assume scene of action surface command".

3.20am: The first helicopter arrives at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary with casualties.

4am: A temporary restriction on flying, legally enforceable, is imposed. The exclusion zone covers a radius of 15 miles around the platform up to a height of 15,000ft.

5.30am: A Royal Navy fishery protection vessel, HMS Blackwater, arrives at the scene.

6.30am: The first of the Nato naval force, USS Halyer and FCS Koba, arrive, one hour ahead of time. Rear-Admiral Redd takes over control of the ships at the scene.

Safety on the platforms

Regular practice prepares oilmen for disasters at sea

Safety precautions on North Sea oil installations are extremely strict and are instilled into oilmen from the moment they are taken on, oil experts said yesterday.

All employees have to attend four or five-day offshore survival courses run by the Petroleum Industry Training Board in Scotland. Those cover not only general safety but also helicopter evacuation drills and in some cases fire-fighting.

Those are backed up by regular so-called Norox training exercises run by the Department of Energy to test lines of communication in simulated disasters.

Ironically the most recent of those, which was carried out last December, simulated an accident at Tartan Alpha, the oil rig close to Piper Alpha which has now had to be closed down as a safety precaution.

The December exercise tested reactions to a simulated disaster in which Tartan Alpha was hit by a supply boat, causing a fire and a small explosion.

Among the features tested were lines of communication, procedures for the control of a fire and the release of hydrogen sulphide gases.

The first thing any worker or visitor to a platform is shown is what they should do in an emergency.

Everyone aboard is allocated a muster station and a lifeboat number and shown where they should wait for further instructions from the safety officer assigned to their group.

They are also shown how to put on life jackets, how to get into the sealed lifeboats and how to fasten the safety harness they will need if the lifeboat is suddenly dropped into the sea. They are told about emergency alarm codes.

However, it seems that the speed of the fire which ripped through the Piper Alpha platform gave the crew no time to put into practice the lessons they will have learned.

All offshore platforms are equipped with sophisticated monitoring and alarm systems, many of them designed to detect any build-up of

explosive gas and many able automatically to close valves and pipelines.

All the systems are monitored by computer-controlled equipment in the platforms control room and on some platforms that information is also beamed by micro-wave to shore bases where it can also be logged.

Since last year emergencies in the North Sea have been handled by the Offshore Clean Seas and Emergency Services (Oces) which merged the databanks of the two previous emergency co-ordination agencies.

That data is stored in a data system which can be called up on terminals at the various incident control facilities throughout the UK, Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway and Ireland. Terminals are also available in the Government departments which monitor the oil industry.

The system contains data about fire-fighting, diving support, pollution control, crane harges and levels of accommodation.

The co-ordinator liaises with

the police, coastguard and military rescue services in the area and helps co-ordinate the handling of inquiries from relatives of those who may be involved in any incident.

Safety regulations, which are laid down by the Department of Energy, specify that no alcohol must be taken on board any oil rig and smoking is limited to specially designated areas in living quarters.

Employees are subjected to searches before they leave the mainland to ensure that they are not carrying matches, lighters, alcoholic drinks, drugs or any other dangerous substances.

Each platform has a safety vessel on hand. As the men work, sleep, eat in the restaurants or relax, the vessel constantly circles in case of trouble.

In recent months the Department of Energy has been putting pressure on oil rig operators to improve offshore safety standards. Those have concentrated on meetings with senior management to prevent accidents.

North Sea death toll is doubled

The Piper Alpha disaster has in one step doubled the number killed in the 17 years that oil and gas have been won from the North Sea.

It is the third incident on the platform. The first, in October 1982, claimed three lives when three maintenance workers fell from an access gangway. The second was in 1984 when 135 were moved off after a gas explosion and 55 needed hospital treatment.

The worst offshore disaster to date has been in the neighbouring Norwegian sector in 1980, when the accommodation platform, Alexander Kielland, collapsed into the icy waters killing 123.

In the North Sea the total death toll in the past 20 years is now more than 500.

In 1987, when there were 28,000 people working offshore in the British sector, there were six deaths and 59 serious injuries. In 1985 there were eight deaths and 103 serious injuries and in 1986 there were three deaths and 101 serious injuries.

A study by Edinburgh University has concluded that working on an offshore oil platform is nine times more dangerous than working in mining and 11 times more dangerous than working on a big construction site.

North Sea incidents since the industry began have included:

November 1965: three killed and 11 injured in an explosion on a drilling barge at Teesport, Cleveland.

December 1965: 13 killed when the rig Sea Gem sank off the mouth of the Humber.

April 1977: a blow-out spilled 20,000 tonnes of oil into the sea from the Phillips Ekofisk platform in the Norwegian sector and caused a 1,500 square mile oil slick.

March 1980: the Alexander Kielland sank; 24 of the 123 dead were British.

November 1981: the drilling rig Transworld 58 drifted for 37 hours before it was brought back under control in heavy seas.

December 1981: the semi-submersible drilling rig Boudland Dolphin developed a serious crack in its hull and 400 were lifted to safety.

August 1982: there was an explosion on the Shell-Eso Cormorant platform killing two and injuring six.

August 1982: 12 were injured in an explosion on the BP Forties Delta platform.

November 1983: four divers were killed when a diving bell working in the Frigg field suffered sudden decompression.

January 1985: two were killed and two injured in an explosion on the Phillips Foanbe field.

May 1985: six were killed after an explosion on the Shell Esso Auk platform.

November 1985: 259 were rescued by the RAF from the Piper Alpha support ship Tharos, when she lost three of her eight anchors in a heavy storm.

May 1988: 69 were rescued by helicopter from the drilling rig Glomar Labrador after it collided with a 20,000-tonne freighter off the coast of Yorkshire.

Earlier this week 11 were moved off the Shell Esso Brent platform after a fire.

Unions predicted 'conflict of interest'

Unions representing offshore workers say the Government has been warned repeatedly that entrusting safety to the Department of Energy is a "contradictory and unhealthy situation which could lead to a major disaster".

Mr Roger Lyons, assistant general secretary of the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union, said it gave him no consolation to point to the Piper Alpha tragedy as vindication of his concern.

The department maintained yesterday that its Petroleum Engineering Division oversaw offshore safety because it had working for it "some of the best men in the field in the world".

A report of the inquiry into Offshore Safety was presented to Parliament eight years ago. Mr Lyons and his colleagues on the committee, Mr John Miller of the transport union, disagreed with its recom-

mendation that offshore safety should be handled by the department and published a minority report. Offshore safety, they said, should be the responsibility of an independent government agency.

Both men felt strongly that pressures within the department to extract the oil and gas quickly would create conflict with the responsibility to ensure the highest possible safety standards.

They said then: "Any unification of responsibilities under the auspices of the Department of Energy, as the sponsoring department, entails a continuing risk to the possible detriment of safety standards".

They rejected one of the committee's main recommendations that the Department of Energy was capable of "discharging this responsibility effectively".

Mr Lyons and Mr Miller

highlighted the Norwegian decision that the industry's sponsoring department should have no responsibility for health and safety.

"One leading transnational corporation found the Norwegian inspectorate much 'tougher' than the 'weaker' UK system. Norwegian inspectors, for example, make sudden inspections, with legal rights to seize seats on helicopters without notice, unlike the UK situation where advance notice is given to the operator for access, with all that implies. The operators, of course, prefer the UK system."

They said that while trade unions in the Norwegian sector had recognized union safety delegates on the rigs, the situation in the British sector was "really quite scandalous" with minimum union representation.

Although the obligation for

rig safety rests with the Health and Safety Executive, the work, by agreement, is actually done by the Department of Energy because of its acknowledged expertise and experience.

Mr Ron Todd, general secretary of the transport union, said the disaster was bound to raise safety questions in an industry which hitherto had an excellent record.

He added: "Workers in this industry, vital to Britain's future, need to be assured that everything humanly possible is being done to guarantee their safety".

Mr John Prescott, Labour's energy spokesman, called for a full inquiry into the tragedy "with nothing barred and everything examined".

He said: "This industry spends less on safety training in relation to the money coming out of the industry than any other industry".



A survivor, his head swathed in bandages, is helped from a helicopter at Aberdeen; while medical staff at the hospital tend to another burns victim.

Search for clues

Experts to seek source of explosion

Engineers will attempt to land on the remains of the Piper Alpha platform as soon as possible to try to find out what caused the massive explosion.

They will try to trace the initial fuel for the explosion and its source of ignition. A sudden build-up in gas pressure in the oil flow lines could have caused a pipe fracture, with the gas being ignited by a spark or by an electric fault in the miles of cables which run through the platform.

However, Bechtel, the platform's designer, said yesterday it has no theories as to how the explosion occurred.

The platform was designed at Bechtel's west London offices and many who worked on the original project in the early 1970s are now giving Occidental what help they can to discover how the accident occurred.

Mr Jack Laurjensen of Bechtel, who was on the original design team, said: "I could not have imagined anything like this happening. There are so many things

involved in such a complex platform." Gas from the oil reservoir is treated in the platform. Natural gas liquids are drawn off and mixed with the crude oil. The gas is then compressed and sent 34 miles north to join the Elf Frigg pipeline which takes it to St Fergus.

Some of the gas is also re-injected into the reservoir to maintain pressure and only rarely, when wells are being redrilled or undergoing new testing, is gas flared off.

One theory is that a sudden surge of gas from a pocket in the reservoir could have caused a pipe leak. The fact that the control room computer printouts which record pressures in every valve and pipe on the platform have probably been destroyed in the explosion will make the investigating engineers task more difficult.

Because natural gas is odourless - British Gas add the smell at their treatment centres for safety reasons - none of the workers on the platform

would have noticed a build up, although in areas where gas leaks are likely automatic detectors are installed.

In the search for the cause of ignition, experts will have to investigate the risk posed by the cigarette smoking allowed in the accommodation quarters of Piper Alpha. Experts said yesterday that it was possible that a stray spark in the living quarters could have been sucked back into the compression unit, causing an explosion. The Rolls-Royce aero-engines used to pressurize the natural gas for delivery to shore are another possible source of ignition.

The tearing apart of the platform by the explosion was viewed with incredulity by many experts yesterday.

The jacket on which the platform stands is criss-crossed by a latticework of steel, to make it capable of withstanding the battering from the North Sea. However, it was disclosed that structural weaknesses of the jacket had led to it being strengthened with giant clamps.

Counting the cost

Insurance pay-outs set to total record \$1bn

The Piper platform disaster is likely to cost the insurance industry one billion dollars and lead to higher premiums being charged for other offshore installations in the future.

The platform was insured through London brokers Willis Faber, with the risk being placed throughout the world insurance markets. A company spokesman said yesterday: "This is probably going to be the largest loss on the North Sea."

"According to preliminary estimates, losses resulting from both physical damages and liabilities could total one billion dollars.

"It will be several days before an exact break-down of how liabilities are

spread and how much will have to be paid out for loss of life, physical damage, loss of oil output and potential pollution damage.

However, in the London insurance market it is being said that the disaster will inevitably lead to an increase in future insurance premiums for the industry.

Mr Philip Olsen, of brokers Kitcat & Aitken said: "There has been a significant reduction in premiums in the marine area because of overcapacity. A claim of this magnitude will have an impact on premium rates."

Mr Chris Fountain, an analyst at brokers Country Nawest Woodmac, the oil industry specialists, said: "It will frighten off the competition and

push up premiums in the oil and energy businesses".

However, there are some in the oil industry who are already predicting that the Piper platform could be refurbished and back in production within a year.

If the 36 wells are intact and the jacket structure is undamaged, new production and accommodation modules could be fabricated and installed.

A long halt to production from Piper or any continued shutdown from the other fields in the pipeline network in the area could affect Britain's oil taxation revenues.

The complex provides about 15 per cent of the UK daily oil output and

provides between £500 and £700 million a year in oil taxation for the Government.

Although world oil prices are low at the moment, and unlikely to be affected by the disaster, according to oil traders, any increase in demand in the winter would mean a substantial loss in oil tax revenues.

The disaster has come at a time when fields are often closed down for overhaul and maintenance, so the effect of the loss of production from Piper will not be as acute as it would have been if the incident had occurred in the middle of winter, when demand for oil and more importantly natural gas is at its peak.

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It wa

Jumping

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A high

engulfed in smoke. The flames were billowing above me. I felt my head being cooked.'

It was fry and die, or jump and try

Foreman lost six friends in inferno

A foreman paint blaster said yesterday he believed he had lost six colleagues as he and two friends ran through the flames on the Piper Alpha and jumped 100 ft into the sea to safety.

Mr Bill Lobban, aged 27, of Aberdeen, had burns to both hands and a fractured wrist. He was in deep shock as he told his story after a police debriefing at a hotel at Aberdeen airport.

Clutching the arm of his wife, Susan, whom he married four weeks ago, Mr Lobban said he had just finished watching a film with friends in the cinema in the accommodation section when there was a big explosion and panels fell in through the roof.

"Lights were coming down everywhere. I went downstairs to get some warm gear and a

Mr Gareth Davies, aged 30, of Colchester, Essex, a diver, was the only worker on Piper Alpha who knew nothing about the initial explosion. He was working 50 ft beneath the surface of the water when colleagues abruptly started hauling him up. "I broke the surface and just saw a heap of fire. It was like hell on Earth. I saw a couple of guys standing at a corner of the rig when they were suddenly engulfed by flames."

survival suit and we tried to find our way out of the section. There were a lot of flames and smoke and gradually it came into the accommodation section but we managed to find our way out and on to the pipe-deck.

"There were more explosions and the rig tilted to an angle of 30 degrees. It just suddenly dropped down at one side and the explosions continued all around us."

There were up to 20 workers in Mr Lobban's group trying to find an escape route through the flames.

"It was just terrifying. I ran out when there was a lull in the flames and smoke because we knew this was our only chance. We could touch nothing on the deck because it was burning red hot. So we just ran to the edge and jumped straight into the water."

Mr Lobban said he grabbed a bit of wooden debris and then climbed onto the Tharos. He pulled his two friends, Mr Roy Thomson, of Keigh, Banffshire, and Mr Alec Wood, of Torphins, Deeside, to safety on the debris.

However, he said he believed he had lost six colleagues.



Firemen and medical staff work together to help a survivor of the explosion being stretchered from the helicopter which rescued him from the North Sea.

One of the survivors of the fires and explosions which split apart the Alpha Piper platform said yesterday that it had been a case of "fry and die or jump and try".

Mr Ron Carey, aged 45, an instrument technician, of Irvine, Strathclyde, said: "I was trapped by a mass of smoke and flames. It was over the side or nothing." He said that he had been working on a corner of the platform when the wind blew smoke and flames towards him and a workmate.

He added: "There was a mass of smoke. There was only one thing to do. I dived about 50ft, totally engulfed in smoke. I landed in a clear bit of water. All around me there were bits of lifeboat and debris was falling down."

"The flames were billowing above me. I felt my head being cooked. I had to keep ducking down in the water to get it

Reports by David Cross, Michael Evans, Ruth Gledhill, Tim Jones, Robert Matthews, Andrew Morgan, William Peakin, David Sapsted and David Young

cool." He was being dragged down by his boots, overalls and heavy sweater.

"I'm a reasonable swimmer but it was a big handicap. I couldn't take the sweater off because of the chill factor. I was about 30 minutes in the water before I was rescued. Two or three other men were with me and there were two bodies floating face down."

He said that he became worried that he might not find any wreckage big enough to keep him afloat. Then he saw a lump of polystyrene foam.

"I couldn't reach it because the wind was blowing me back. It was pushing me away faster than I could swim."

He and the three people with him later tried to scramble aboard part of a survival boat which they managed to grab. A friend called Bobby offered him his hand.

He added: "I couldn't get a foothold, the waves were hitting me in my chest. I didn't want to drag him off so I just stayed in the water. While we were on the rig I was hoping against hope that something might happen — that maybe they could get control of the fire in some way — but that was not the case."

"There were no pumps to pump the water — and there we were in the North Sea. We had all that water around us and no way to get it to us. We had sprinklers but they weren't strong enough."

'Men blasted clean off rig'

The foreman of a gang of oil rig painters working on rigs in the field described how he watched in horror as men died in the flames.

Mr John Maxwell, aged 50, of Belfast, who was aboard the fire-fighting supply ship, Tharos, when he heard the boom of the first explosion, said: "We realized right away it was serious and I ran out and saw flames shooting from the rig and a growing pool of smoke."

"After the first explosion there were a series of others and it was awful to watch the men trying to escape the flames. I saw a group of about six or seven men in survival suits on the rig's helicopter pad with flames all around them."

"They were screaming, shouting and waving for help and obviously thought they would be taken off more quickly if they stayed put. "But then the whole of the rig was rocked by another



Mr John Maxwell, "a terrible thing to watch"

huge explosion and a kind of fireball shot across the helipad and all of the men on it disappeared. I think the explosion would almost certainly have blasted them clean off the rig and they would have fallen about 200 ft into the sea.

"The fire-fighting ship I was on moved in closer and

blasted the flames with all its hoses, but it didn't seem to be doing any good and we all felt helpless watching the men desperately trying to get away. One of the worst sights was seeing about five lads climbing down from the derrick above the rig to try to escape then finding the heat too intense and having to climb frantically back to the top.

"They looked desperate and there was no way out for them. But they couldn't get down because of the flames and they couldn't climb any higher. Then all of a sudden everyone on the boat felt sick when there was yet another explosion and the derrick with the men on it were wiped out."

"I think we were all too shocked to cry. It was a terrible thing to watch. We could hardly bear it. Eventually, we could see the metal getting red hot and the whole of the structure began to buckle and cave in."

Medical staff acted to plan

Dr Gordon Stone, community medicine specialist at Aberdeen, described how he activated the emergency plan.

Dr Stone, who has been in charge of the plan for a month, said it had been reviewed shortly before he took over.

He said: "On the basis of the information we had, we decided it was a major disaster before midnight and then alerted nursing, administrative and medical staff."

About 30 extra staff were called at home and 20 doctors worked throughout the night.

"We set up a control room next to the police control room and liaised closely with them. This helped us to ascertain what the pattern of patient in-put was likely to be."

Dr Stone arranged for Mr Alasdair Matheson, hospital consultant, to travel to the Tharos where an emergency hospital was set up with three anaesthetists and two junior doctors.



Mr Alasdair Matheson, consultant on the Tharos.

The off-shore emergency plan, as it is known, is practised twice a year. "One could not say it went totally perfectly. The patients' care could not be faulted. The hits that we could improve on were mainly to do with some of the support services", he said.

The Tharos, a £50 million support vessel, is one of the

most modern and sophisticated of its type.

The vessel entered service in 1979 and is owned 27.3 per cent by Occidental, 25 per cent by BP, 17.6 per cent by Texaco, 15 per cent by International Thomson and 15 per cent by Union Texas.

It is of a semi-submersible design, similar to many exploration drilling rigs, floating on two pontoons which can be flooded to improve stability. It has eight heavy anchors and can use its thruster propellers to dynamically position itself at a fixed point.

Sixteen high pressure fire monitors can pump tonnes of water per minute. It also carries a hydraulic gangway and two cranes, one able to lift 435 tonnes, to move equipment on or off a platform.

The Tharos has a fully equipped hospital which can handle 22 patients, with trained staff, and accommodation for another 300.

The rescue operation

Jumping is the only answer

The sophisticated escape and rescue systems on board all North Sea oil platforms are virtually useless in the event of an explosion such as the one which struck Piper Alpha, a leading safety expert said yesterday.

By law, all North Sea oil platforms must carry sufficient numbers of Totally Enclosed Motor-Propelled Survival Craft (TEMPSC), capable of carrying about 40 men.

However, in sudden catastrophes, they cannot be launched in time, according to Mr John Feather, training manager of the Offshore Survival Centre at Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology

in Aberdeen, which trains about 13,000 platform workers a year in survival techniques.

"If you've got very little time, like after an explosion, you've just got to jump over the side", he said.

The centre teaches platform workers how to survive jumps into the sea, but in training those are from a height of only three metres, to reduce the risk of injury.

The men who jumped from Piper Alpha fell 10 times that distance and would have entered the water at more than 40 miles an hour.

Falls from such a height must be done cleanly, feet first, and with the hands

covering the mouth and nose. Water forced into the nose at such speed can damage the vagus nerve in the brain, leading to instant death.

Life jackets have to be carried rather than worn, to avoid the risk of neck injury on entering the water.

Once in the water, retaining body heat becomes vital. Any clothing that is not pulling the survivor down should be kept on, but no attempt should be made to swim to shore, as that greatly increases the rate of heat loss.

Those who managed to escape from the Piper Alpha platform by jumping the 30 metres into the sea faced burning oil on the sea surface.



Flames melted my hard hat

Mr Iain Letham, aged 27, an oil worker, of Muir of Ord, near Inverness, told how a huge blast threw him out of a rescue craft into the sea as he attempted to pick up survivors.

"I went in in an inflatable to try to pick up men under the platform when there was a huge explosion and I found myself in the water. The flames were so intense that they melted my hard hat as I swam for a boat and the plastic in my survival suit also began to soften."

"This will certainly prove to be the worst disaster I have ever been involved with. Even though the men were from all over Britain, it will have a profound effect on the Aberdeen community", he said.

Airport mortuary is set up again

A mortuary for the bodies was established in a building at Aberdeen airport owned by the Grampian regional council. Victims of the Chinook helicopter crash had been taken there 18 months ago.

It stands next to the premises of British International Helicopters and Bristow Helicopters, whose crew worked alongside military personnel and spent several hours ferrying survivors to shore yesterday.

Both companies had ferried

oil workers to the Piper Alpha on Tuesday morning in what was a regular run every few days. British International used six helicopters with 20 crew.

Mr Robert McQueen, the company's general manager, said he was in deep shock. "But I am in no position to say how this will affect future production in the North Sea. Only Occidental will know that."

"Our men are trained for these appalling eventualities

and they have not yet described their feelings to me in de-briefings. But obviously they are deeply affected."

Mr Alan MacGregor, general manager of Bristow, said seven aircraft and 16 crew took part in the rescue.

"This will certainly prove to be the worst disaster I have ever been involved with. Even though the men were from all over Britain, it will have a profound effect on the Aberdeen community", he said.

City accustomed to grief

A high price to pay for Texas Gold

Aberdeen is the granite city, architecturally and spiritually. Yesterday it seemed an appropriate complex for a place obliged to confront another disaster close to its shores.

Before the discovery of oil it was the fishing fleet and lifeboats which more regularly came to grief in the North Sea as men struggled to eke a living. Now, Texas Gold has become the prize for risking life. Throughout the city yesterday people spoke of "the price", knowing full well that oil costs dear — this time it has cost lives.

Flags flew at half-mast but there was a tangible, philosophic aspect to the city which is only just recovering from the loss of its men 18 months ago when a Chinook helicopter crashed off the Shetland Isles.

Survivors at the Royal Infirmary spoke movingly of the horror on board the Piper Alpha but there were not many

who would unequivocally say they would not return to the rigs.

Those emerging from police debriefings, relatively unharmed and radiant in their survival, were almost brutally honest in their intention to start work again with any oil company, including Occidental, as soon as possible. They spoke of mortgages, children, £400 a week. After a decent interval, there was a feeling that most would soon prepare to risk "the price" again.

Mr Frank Doran, MP for Aberdeen South, highlighted some concerns about the safety record of the Piper Alpha, which many men stepping off Bristow yesterday echoed. Most re-helicopters yesterday echoed. Most re-helicopters yesterday echoed. Most re-helicopters yesterday echoed.

But Mr Doran pressed his point. He said he wanted to know if there might be a link between the explosion four years

ago on the Piper Alpha and the disaster on Tuesday night. An inquiry will be held but Aberdeen did not seem in the mood yesterday to abandon its livelihood in the face of the risks.

Mr Alex Salmond, the Scottish National MP for Banff and Buchan and the party's energy spokesman, echoed the thoughts of the city when he said the disaster reflected the human cost of gathering the wealth of the North Sea.

In the annals, there are probably many similar epithets after fishing disasters in the last century but the fishing industry was obliged to continue and hoped.

In yesterday's sunshine, a similar spirit existed when a makeshift mortuary in a building at the airport provided a sanctuary for the many corpses.

Yesterday left a bitter taste in the city but it has tasted austerity before and emerged, with some sense of growth, to rebuild.

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NEWS ROUNDUP

Drive to reduce thefts from cars

The Government is about to launch an important initiative to stem the soaring growth of thefts from cars in a move designed to secure a drop in the crime figures.

Ministers say that without last year's 12 per cent rise in thefts from cars, there would have been a big reduction in the crime figures.

Mr John Patten, Minister of State at the Home Office, has already had talks with insurance companies and will make a speech within the next few weeks setting out the ideas in greater detail.

Judge orders acquittal

Four youths were acquitted yesterday at Knightsbridge Crown Court on the direction of the judge of conspiring to commit robbery during the "steaming" of a London Underground train.

Police pay-out

The family of Blair Peach, the New Zealand teacher killed during an anti-National Front demonstration in Southall, west London, in 1979, accepted £75,000 damages from the Metropolitan Police yesterday after allegations that he had been killed by a blow from a police truncheon.

Public drinking ban

Coventry got the go-ahead yesterday for an experimental by-law banning the drinking of alcohol in designated public places in the city centre.

Satellite sport

Sky Television, owned by News International, publishers of The Times, will broadcast a 24-hour sports service from a fourth transponder on the Asta satellite under a 10-year leasing agreement with British Telecom International to be signed today.

Sponsorship dilemma

A report published today throws into question the effectiveness of business sponsorship of the arts as a marketing device.

Ridley toughens policy on local government finance

Poll tax curbs on council borrowing

By Robin Oakley Political Editor

A dramatic change of policy to tighten control over local government finance in the run-up to the introduction of the community charge was announced by the Government yesterday.

Mr Nicholas Ridley, Secretary of State for the Environment, in a surprise statement to MPs after a Cabinet local government finance committee meeting on Wednesday night, said the Government would in future control the amounts that councils borrow rather than concentrating on their expenditure.

The aim was to wipe out ingenious forms of leasebacks, deferred purchase and other extended credit schemes which have enabled councils to defy the Government's spending restrictions and which have seen some pile up big debts to be serviced by community charge payers.

Mr Ridley told MPs that local authorities had accumulated £45 billion in debts, which was costing ratepayers £6 billion a year to service.

A consultation paper issued yesterday proposes that from April 1990 councils will be forced to use 75 per cent of their accumulated receipts from council house sales for debt redemption or future capital commitments.

At present, councils can spend only 20 per cent of council house sale receipts. On other receipts, councils will be allowed to spend up to 50 per cent as they wish, compared with the present limit of 30 per cent.

Mr Ridley told MPs that the Government would bring forward legislation as soon as possible to alter the basis on which grants are paid in England and Wales.

In the past, local authorities have been able to alter the figures for their spending in supplementary reports for up to three years after the expenditure has been incurred, increasing the amount spent and gaining extra grants.

Under a "rough justice" measure, that practice is to be stopped. Local authorities will only be able to include expenditure in the past three years of which the Department of the Environment had been informed by midnight on Wednesday.

Grant payments for individual local authorities in 1989-90 will be calculated on the basis of the new legislation. As before, they will take into account grant related expenditure assessments and block grant mechanisms.

However, Mr Ridley said the figures would be based "not on authorities' reported total expenditure but on a figure derived from

each authority based on information about their present levels of total expenditure and projected forward". Allowance will be made for changes in function.

He said the arrangements would give councils greater certainty about their rate support grant entitlements for 1989-90 and previous years and would bring the old system to a close on an orderly basis.

Mr Ridley also announced the level of permitted local authority current expenditure for England next year at £29,140 million. He said that was 4.7 per cent, or £1.3 billion, more than local authorities' budgets for the current year, after deducting the costs of polytechnics, which from next April will be a charge on central government.

The sum is slightly more than the expected level of inflation and includes £110 million for the extra costs of preparing to introduce the community charge.

The central government contribution of about half is to be £13,575 billion, which is about £1.1 billion more than the grant to be paid for 1988-89.

Mr Ridley said that if spending was held steady then the increase in rates next year should be less than the rate of inflation.

He told MPs that seven high-spending local authorities will be rate-capped for a second year. They are Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Thamesdown, all in London.

Riverside development marks return to classics



Mr Terry, the architect, in the gardens of the classical Richmond Riverside development with the results of his design. (Photograph: Bryn Colton).

By Christopher Warran Property Correspondent

The £20 million Richmond Riverside development beside the Thames at Richmond Bridge, Surrey, is controversial not because the buildings are unacceptably modern but because they are traditional and classical.

The development includes offices, shops, restaurants and 28 flats and has involved the restoration of Richmond's Victorian OM Town Hall.

Launching the scheme, Mr Terry explained that it included revolutionary features which were in fact following the practices of the Georgian and Victorian builders. "The lesson we have to learn is that if we want to put up buildings which are going to last for our grandchildren we will have to build as our forefathers did".

Fears for oceanographic research

Anger at state funding cuts

By Anatol Lieven

British and international scientists are predicting severe damage to oceanographic research in Britain as a result of cuts in state funding.

They point out that this field of science was pioneered in Britain, and is of crucial importance to the understanding of such weather changes as the "greenhouse effect".

The reason for the cuts is a reduction of about £2.5 million over the past three years in the grant to the council from the Department of Education and Science.

About 60 of the 200 staff at the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences at Wormley, Surrey, are expected to lose their jobs.

Scientists at Wormley say the proposed cuts will make Britain's contribution to the project minimal.

British Medical Association

Doctors in pesticides check

The dangers of pesticide poisoning are to be investigated by doctors expressed fears yesterday that it could be causing serious health problems.

The effects of drugs were closely checked "but there is no central organization collating statistics on pesticide poisonings", he added.

A Leicester GP, Dr John Inman, told the BMA's annual meeting in Norwich that last year more than 26 million

kilos of pure pesticides were used in Britain. "A billion gallons of formulated pesticides were sprayed on British crops and streets, railway lines, parks and of course, gardens", he said.

The effects of drugs were closely checked "but there is no central organization collating statistics on pesticide poisonings", he added.

However, a recent study showed that of 171 patients attending an allergy clinic,

nearly half were sensitive to pesticides and nearly 20 per cent had blood levels containing more than one pesticide.

Doctors should boycott boxing matches, making it impossible for them to take place, the BMA said yesterday. The call is its strongest yet in a four-year campaign to have the sport banned.

Telecom to freeze charges for a year

By Mark Ellis

British Telecom is to freeze most of its charges until August next year.

It will also introduce lower standing charges to benefit the elderly and the disabled under an agreement with the Office of Telecommunications, the watchdog body.

Professor Bryan Carsberg, OfTel's director general, yesterday announced a four-year deal on charges. He said it tightened the existing rules and was won after "tough negotiations".

The deal will fix Telecom's average prices at 4.5 per cent below the general inflation rate, instead of the current 3 per cent, from August 1989 and will mean reduced costs for customers if the inflation rate is less than 4.5 per cent.

Most customers will face an increase in the quarterly standing charge, as Telecom says the present rate does not cover related costs, but that should be more than offset during the next five years by reductions in call charges.

Professor Carsberg said Telecom had not finalized its plans for reduced standing charges for customers making relatively few calls, but they would include line rentals of about £8 instead of £13 -

about 60 per cent of the usual domestic rental. That would help those who use the telephone as a lifeline, but do not make many outgoing calls.

To deter abuse those on the "low user" scheme would pay higher charges for their calls.

About half, £5,000 million, of Telecom's revenue is covered by the deal, which includes inland services, exchange line rentals, direct dialled calls and operator connected calls, but excludes international calls and public pay telephones.

Since Telecom was privatized in 1984 customers have enjoyed a 14 per cent fall in prices because of a 3 per cent constraint on increases.

The latest inflation-linked deal would show a 30 per cent saving to telephone subscribers over the nine years covered by the two deals.

Mr Iain Vallance, Telecom's chairman, said: "The new and tighter regime presents a very demanding challenge for price reduction at a time when British Telecom is financing a £2.5 billion annual investment programme, and aiming to achieve higher standards of service".

Desert death trip husband criticized

Verdicts of accidental death were recorded yesterday on Mrs Jennifer Coombes and her sons, Gregory, aged 10, and Andrew, aged 7, who died in the Tunisian Sahara last month after their hired car became trapped in sand.

Mr Alan Coombes, her husband, aged 36, from Longstanton, Cambridgeshire, who was found on a tractor after he had wandered for 48 hours seeking help, was criticized by the East Sussex coroner, Mr David Wadman.

The coroner said that Mr Coombes had gone totally unprepared into a barren countryside which had no hint of protection.

It was something he would have to live with for the rest of his life, although recriminations would achieve nothing.

The drive in a hired Peugeot 205 car was not a trip to the countryside in Sussex.

Tragically the family had separated: Mr Coombes walking towards the town of Douz and his wife and sons walking back to their car.

They never reached it, Mr Wadman said. He said Mr Coombes had been very lucky himself to be found alive.

Mr Coombes said he had set out to drive from the Tunisian town of Matmata to Douz. There were three routes on the map and in retrospect he had probably picked the worst.

It had not been his intention to travel into the heart of the Sahara and it was an outrage to suggest that was what he had been doing. The area he had been using just faded away into sand.

He said he had tried to lift the two wheeled drive car from the sand with an aid door he had found but had failed.

After the car became stuck the family walked together for an hour and then separated.

He told the coroner: "Yes I now realize that this was a mistake and we should have all stayed together."

He said they had a fire and a half of water between all four of them and he had taken it with him mistakenly thinking his wife and sons would find water in a tower he had seen. In the event it was dry.

He said all one stage he had spent all night under a rock sheltering from a sandstorm and at one time he had wished he would fall asleep and never wake up again.

Battery that just won't die kills jobs

By John Spicer, Employment Affairs Correspondent

Duracell's long-life batteries are lasting so long that the company is having to close one of its factories with the loss of 350 jobs.

The plant in Crawley, West Sussex, which manufactures specialist power packs for calculators, watches and hearing aids, will close at the end of next month. Mr John Siddall, director of manufacturing for Duracell Europe, said: "These batteries have an extraordinarily long life and require infrequent replacement in consumer products that have themselves reached market saturation".

A company spokesman added that because of the length of the batteries' lifespan sales growth was slow. "These small cells in watches or calculators last a very long time and seldom need changing and therefore the factory was not running efficiently", he said.

Other factories in Europe were also making the specialist cells and the company would concentrate manufacture of these products there. He

emphasized that Duracell's normal alkaline batteries would still be produced at factories in Crawley.

Local union officials last night described the closure as a "body blow". Mr John Schooling, Croydon district secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, said: "What they are saying is that another bit of British industry has gone down the chute and we will now be buying them in from abroad".

Mr Schooling said that he and his officials were only told of the plan two days ago. "We knew the company had plans for production changes, but we did not expect the loss of an entire factory and 350 jobs in our wildest dreams".

Mr Schooling said the financial settlements proposed by the company were "reasonable", but most of those losing jobs would not find another. The whole matter was cut and dried and there would not be a fight over the closure.

Mr Siddall said Duracell had been restructuring its European operations

during the past two years to create a more streamlined organisation. Sales revenue in that period had increased by more than 40 per cent.

He said the company intended to become the world's leading battery maker and that could only be achieved if it remained cost-effective in a highly competitive market.

Mr Siddall said that "unfortunately" restructuring of the part of the company had in mind could not be done painlessly. But Duracell had developed a comprehensive redundancy programme, which would include retraining within the company, professional counselling and out-placement services to help employees find work.

Duracell, which has been in Crawley since 1961, employs 3,500 people in Europe, including £200 in the UK. The company last night said that its core business of consumer alkaline batteries increased sales worldwide by 20 per cent in the first four months of this year, compared with the same period in 1987.

Large advertisement for Philips products. Features include: PHILIPS COMPACT DISC PLAYER Model CD260 for £139.99. A list of various electronic products such as Colour TVs, CD players, Hi-Fi separates, and compact cameras, all with 'SAVE' amounts and prices. Includes a 'SALE' banner and contact information for Laskys.

Vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page. Includes text like 'Couple for da child a', 'Parents b children's', 'Weekend K', 'Price rise after US', and 'Free-flight'. The text is partially cut off and difficult to read.

Couple sue doctors for damages after child abuse inquiry

By Peter Davenport

Writs claiming aggravated damages were issued yesterday against the two consultants at the centre of the Cleveland child sexual abuse crisis.

The legal action against Dr Marietta Higgs and Dr Geoffrey Wyatt was launched on behalf of a Middlesbrough couple and their three daughters.

The couple are seeking damages for "injury, distress, anxiety, loss and expense by reason of a negligent diagnosis."

The writs, lodged with the district registrar of the High Court in Middlesbrough, also allege that the children, now aged one, three and seven years, were sexually assaulted by the doctors during examinations on June 12 and 13 last year.

Solicitors acting for the family also issued a writ against Cleveland County Council for alleged negligence by its social services department by obtaining place of safety orders to take the children into care. The parents won their children back at a wardship hearing in Leeds in November.

Yesterday Mr Donald

O'Rourke, a partner in the Middlesbrough firm of solicitors acting for the couple, and 11 other families caught up in the crisis, said: "This is a test case and the other 11 families are waiting in the wings. We are seeking substantial damages."

He also announced that a "fighting fund" to help families pay for legal actions was being launched after offers of financial assistance from individuals and companies.

A Cleveland couple whose two daughters, aged two years and seven months, were taken away after a diagnosis of sexual abuse by Dr Wyatt, issued writs on Monday. The children were returned home after seven weeks and a judge later awarded costs against Cleveland County Council.

The couple are seeking damages against Dr Wyatt for medical negligence and against Cleveland County Council for breach of its statutory duty.

A committee of five members of the Northern Regional Health Authority are to decide if the two consultants should face any disciplinary action. Its members will be a doctor, a solicitor, a retired business-

man, the chairman of the authority, Sir Bernard Tomlinson, and his deputy.

It is acknowledged within the authority that they face a difficult situation. If it is decided that no disciplinary action is merited then there may well be demands from Dr Higgs and other professionals on her behalf that she be allowed to return to her duties in Middlesbrough.

Dr Liam Donaldson, the regional medical officer, said: "In this situation we have two individuals who are known to be highly competent. But there has been the suggestion that they could be highly competent in their general practice and in one narrow field allegations have been made about their incompetence. It is almost a unique situation."

Until the authority reaches a decision the two doctors will remain in the posts to which they were assigned after the end of the inquiry in January.

Dr Higgs at a neo-anatomy unit in Newcastle upon Tyne and Dr Wyatt at the Middlesbrough General Hospital. Both are forbidden to handle any cases of suspected child sexual abuse.

Barbara Amiel, page 17

A touch of music from Aladdin's cave



Two police constables trying out their musical talent on violins on display in a large warehouse at the Old Wembley police station, north London. They form part of an Aladdin's cave of stolen antiques worth £1 million -

the biggest collection recovered by Scotland Yard in recent years. Police are inviting burglary victims to claim their property from among the record haul of 3,000 items, including musical instruments, paintings, furniture,

clocks, silver, jewellery, a collection of broken cameras and even an elephant's foot. The antiques were stolen in at least 50 burglaries, mostly in London and the Home Counties, but also in the Midlands, over several

years and were recovered in raids on 14 warehouses, antique shops and private addresses in north London last month. The items will be on display in the public until July 17. (Photograph: Peter Trivelpiece)

Parents battle for children's charter

By Ian Smith

Distraught parents yesterday urged immediate government adoption of recommendations for new child protection measures proposed by the Butler-Sloss Cleveland inquiry. They want a review of the cases of 96 children diagnosed as sexual abuse victims in Leeds.

Mr Antony Newton, Minister for Health, will today receive a request from the Leeds and Bradford Children and Parents Support Group that local social service directors be ordered to review each of the cases, using guidelines called for by Lord Justice Butler-Sloss.

Parents who have come under suspicion believe that what they see as a futuristic child protection charter must take seriously the views expressed by the affected children.

In her report Lord Justice Butler-Sloss says a danger exists that in looking towards the welfare of children believed to be victims of sexual abuse, the children themselves

may be overlooked. Organizers of the Leeds and Bradford child and parents' support group claim unfair and emotionally traumatic separation of young children from mothers and fathers has already passed the crisis point at which the Butler-Sloss inquiry was ordered in Cleveland.

Mrs Penelope Brooke, founder of the support group, said: "We applaud the recognition by the inquiry panel that the wishes of children are paramount, that nothing is more important than protecting their physical and emotional well-being and allowing them to express their wishes."

In almost every case investigated by the support group, she said, the wishes of children were ignored.

Allegations levelled by dozens of parents are that their children, aged between three and 15, have confirmed being sexual abuse victims only under duress exerted by social workers.

Referrals double in county

By Craig Seton

Significant increases in the number of children on sex abuse registers in the West Midlands were reported yesterday.

More than 900 children are on the registers of 11 local authorities, including Hereford and Worcester County Council, which reported a "staggering" increase.

The number of sex abuse referrals in Hereford and Worcester in the first six months of this year is running at about the double last year's rate.

The council reported 103 referrals involving 138 children in the past six months.

Mr Laurie Gregory, the county council's social services director of operations, said: "We owe a debt to Cleveland. One of the recommendations of the Cleveland report is that social services departments should create specialist assessment teams, and that is what we did last summer."

Chaos feared after High Court ruling

School merger upset

By David Tytler, Education Editor

Children and teachers faced chaos yesterday when the High Court blocked the merger of two Derbyshire schools after protests from parents.

A new head and staff have been appointed for the merged school due to open in September and many of the old staff have taken other jobs or early retirement.

Derbyshire County Council may appeal against Lord Justice Watkins' ruling. It overturns the decision of Mr Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education and Science, to allow the merger of Ilkeston and Canteloupe schools and switch Ilkeston's senior pupils to a new sixth-form college.

Both comprehensive schools will have to open in September and council officials were contacting newly appointed teachers yesterday to discuss their next moves. Building contracts worth £130,000 had been signed for work to extend Ilkeston School.

It is unlikely the Department of Education and Science will appeal but the council will make its decision after Lord Justice Watkins, who was sitting with Mr Justice McNeill, publishes the reasons for the ruling later this month.

A group of parents from Ilkeston School, led by Mr Norman Hardy, aged

41, an unemployed driver, had argued that the merger would restrict parental choice.

The court granted Mr Hardy a declaration that Mr Baker's original decision 12 months ago to block the merger was valid. Parents had complained that administrative chaos in his department had led the minister to make an unlawful U-turn based on inept legal advice.

A three-day hearing was told that families had been subjected to a reorganization nightmare. Mr Stephen Sedley, QC, for the parents, said it was a story of administrative chaos which might have formed the basis of an episode of *Yes, Minister* had Franz Kafka been the guest scribe.

He described how an official from the department made an unauthorized telephone call to the county council in June last year saying that the merger plans had been approved. The news was leaked and Mr Peter Rost, the Conservative MP for Erewash, "raised Cain" with Mr Baker, who then announced that the proposals had not been approved.

Department of Education lawyers advised that the unauthorized telephone call constituted a legally-binding

decision to approve the merger. It became clear that the department considered the proposals to be sound and would not object to them on educational grounds.

Mr Hardy, whose son Simon, aged 13, goes to Ilkeston School, said he was delighted by the court's decision.

Mr Geoffrey Lennox, chairman of Derbyshire County Council education committee, said: "The decision is a tragedy for most young people in the area. They will be disadvantaged to a degree which is bound to make most parents extremely angry. A handful of parents have ensured that the education of the vast majority of children will suffer."

Mr Rost said: "Any difficulties that are faced in September will be wholly due to the council's own mismanagement. This is game, set and match to the parents who were determined that sixth form education should be maintained in Ilkeston."

The local government Ombudsman yesterday condemned Derbyshire County Council's refusal to refund fees paid by parents for sixth-form geography field trips undertaken as part of A level courses.

Portfolio PLUS NEW Accumulator Holiday windfall

Two of the three winners of yesterday's daily Portfolio prize of £4000 will use their share of the money to go on holiday.

Mr E. Stadians, an engineer storekeeper of Hounslow, west London, will be putting the money towards a holiday in Austria, where his wife has relatives.

Mr Peter White, from Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, was so surprised at his win that he asked his wife to check his number a couple of times. "My wife and I will use most of our winnings to take a holiday in the West Country. We have recently had two bereavements in our family, and the money will allow us to get away and relax."

The third winner, Mr J.A. Nolan, lives in Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

Weekend food prices

Price rises ahead after US drought

By John Young, Agriculture Correspondent

Pork, bacon, poultry and eggs are all expected to cost more in the shops this summer as a result of the drought in the United States, which is pushing up the price of feed. The most seriously affected crop is soy, which is the most important protein element in animal feedstuffs, and the shortage is having a knock-on effect.

Mr Connaught French, chairman of the National Farmers' Union's north east regional poultry committee, said that some poultry farmers were facing bankruptcy.

Those who believed that the failure of the American harvest was a convenient way of reducing the world's grain mountains had forgotten how heavily dependent the intensive livestock industry in Britain was on imported feed ingredients, he said.

The NFU in London said that much depended on whether producers could raise their prices to meet higher costs. Increased feed prices had unfortunately coincided with a cyclical oversupply of some products, notably eggs, which provided little opportunity to pass the extra costs on to the consumer.

Meanwhile, home produced lamb is a real bargain with the average price of whole leg down to £1.85 a lb, whole shoulder £1.08 and loin chops £2.23 a lb. At Sainsbury's, whole leg is down to £1.48 a lb.

The average price of fillet steak is now £5.71 in the South-east and £5.15 in the rest of England and Wales. Rump steak is an average £3.26 a lb, but Tesco have a special offer of £2.69 a lb.

There is a wide choice of fresh fish although there may be a slight price increase. Plaice fillets (6-8oz) are selling at around £2.80 a lb. Coley is about £1.10 a lb. Haddock is £2.50 a lb, and lemon sole and skate wings, £2.30 a lb. Whole whiting is around £1.20 while trout at £1.85 a lb is a good buy.

Summer fruit is becoming more plentiful. Strawberries are now 40-75p a half pound, and raspberries 50-70p a quarter pound; gooseberries 45-60p a lb. Best salad ingredients are lettuce from 17-75p a head with hothouse tomatoes at 35-55p, a lb.

Contempt test case opens

Editors in court over killer's plea

The Attorney-General yesterday asked the High Court to jail or fine two editors for contempt in publishing articles about a convicted sex killer's unsuccessful plea to be released from a mental hospital.

The *Daily Mail* and the *Liverpool Echo* were accused of contempt of a Mental Health Review Tribunal, due to hear an application by Peter Pickering for discharge from Park Lane Hospital, Liverpool, in 1985.

The articles referred to opposition from ministers and MPs and to the backing allegedly given to Pickering by hospital bosses. Mr John Mummery, counsel for the Attorney-General, Sir Patrick Mayhew QC, said they posed a risk of serious prejudice.

Sir David English, editor of the *Daily Mail*, and Christopher Oakley, of the *Echo*, deny the charge.

Mr Mummery told Lord Justice Mann and Mr Justice Henry that Pickering, now in his 50s, was convicted of the manslaughter in 1972 of a girl aged 17 and sent to Broadmoor.

Newspapers which publish any unauthorized disclosure

of information from the EEC will be open to prosecution under the Government's proposed reform of official secrecy, even if such information is available elsewhere in the community, Mr Richard Shepherd, Tory MP for Aldridge, Brownhills, said yesterday at a Campaign for the Freedom of Information meeting.

Mr Shepherd said: "Every other European citizen would know but us."

The *Sunday Sport* newspaper was yesterday reported to the Press Council by the West Somerset coroner, Mr Michael Rose, after he recorded an open verdict on Adam Summerscales, aged 15, of Hillfarrance, near Taunton, Somerset. The youth, who suffered from a rare medical condition which caused excessive body hair, died from shotgun wounds. Mr Rose called the paper's news editor, Mr Howard Soules, before him.

The coroner said he was concerned about reporting of the matter by the *Sunday Sport*.

He was given an undertaking that the newspaper would abide by the Press Council's decision.

Free-flight voucher plan for shoppers

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

Motorists and shoppers will soon have a chance to collect vouchers towards free flights on British Airways.

Up to 100 leading retail chains and garages are expected to take part in the scheme which will be launched in November and will provide collectors with free air tickets for the airline's world network equivalent to the number of vouchers they have amassed.

Mr Keith Mills, an advertising executive, came up with the idea of offering air tickets as an incentive to shoppers last year and he immediately approached British Airways. It was so impressed by the potential for filling its empty seats, that it decided to become a partner in a that it decided to market the idea, called company set up to market the idea, called Air Miles, of which Mr Mills is managing director.

The partners yesterday outlined the scheme to 80 executives from travel agents, retailers and service industries at a presentation in Bordeaux. The airline is confident that when the scheme is launched in November at least 10,000

shops and petrol stations will be involved and a billion vouchers will be in circulation.

British Airways will sell its cheapest tickets to Air Miles which will sell them to the retail organizations taking part in the scheme. The retailers will advertise the fact that customers will be able to save towards the cost of their holiday when buying their petrol, furniture and other goods.

The customer will be given a mileage chart showing the length of every journey in the BA network and will be able to calculate how many vouchers are needed for any journey. Once the required number of vouchers has been collected they can be redeemed at any travel agent taking part in the promotion.

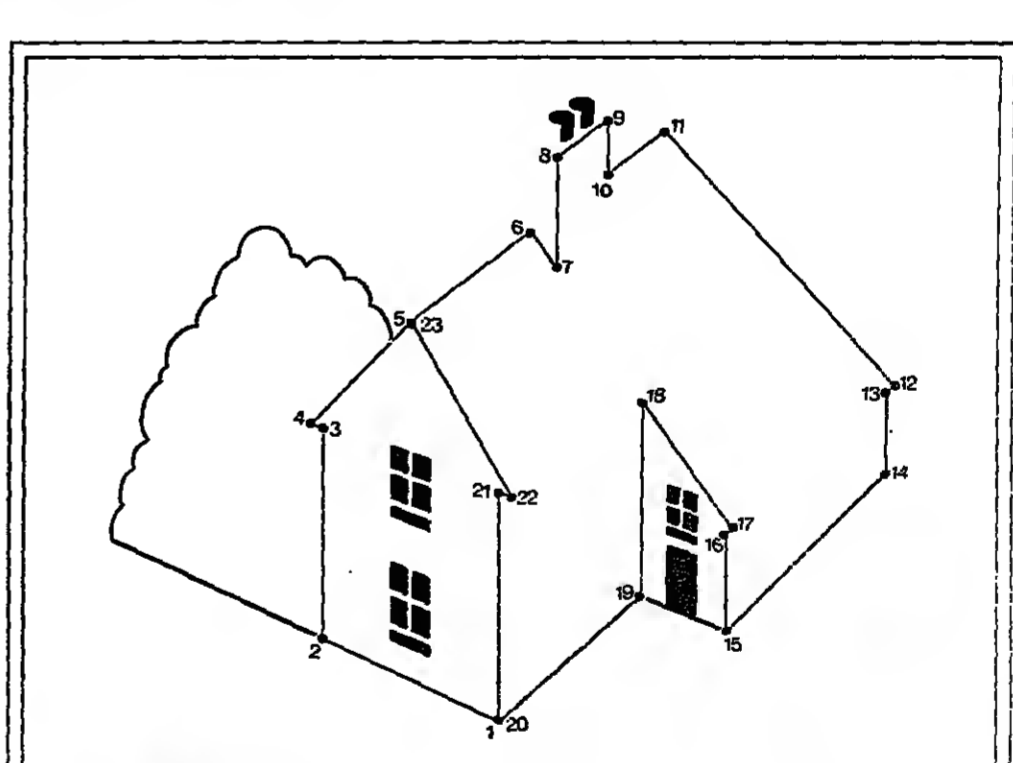
One catch is that British Airways will always give priority to full fare paying passengers and if, as it expects, the scheme is a big success, tickets will only be available on flights with spare seats.

The scheme could also prove very expensive, particularly for the motorist.

Final details of how many vouchers will be needed for a particular flight have yet to be worked out, but one idea is to allow one mile for every £5 worth of petrol bought. As Paris is 219 miles away it would require 438 vouchers, or £2,190 worth of petrol to qualify for a free return trip.

However, anyone buying a three piece suite from a furniture store taking part in the scheme could obtain a free trip for just one purchase. Package holiday-makers travelling with Poundstretcher, Speedbird, Enterprise, Sovereign and Sunmed - all operated by BA subsidiaries - will also be able to use the vouchers to offset some of the cost.

An Air Miles spokesman said last night that as no retailer has yet been signed up it was impossible to say what level of incentive would be set. "It will be a matter of balance between making it attractive and yet not so attractive that they cannot supply the number of people collecting", she said.



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WORLD ROUNDUP

Mystery death case reopened

Washington - Police in Seattle are reopening an investigation into the mysterious death in 1968 of the wife of Mr Melvyn Paisley, the central figure in the Pentagon contract bribes scandal.

Yerevan at standstill

Moscow - The standstill in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, continued yesterday, despite an appeal by the republic's Prime Minister for a return to work.

Earlier, an Armenian official disclosed that one demonstrator had been killed by a plastic bullet on Tuesday. He said the incident took place on the main road to the airport, but not during the violent clashes which followed the eviction of demonstrators from the airport terminal.

The strikes and demonstrations are in support of the demand from the predominantly Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the neighbouring republic of Azerbaijan to be transferred to Armenia.

Flight misery spreads

Industrial action is continuing to severely disrupt air traffic in Italy and Spain (Our Foreign Staff writes). A work-to-rule by Italian customs officials is particularly affecting Rome's Fiumicino airport, both for cargo and passenger flights.

Arafat men defeated

Beirut (Reuter) - Pro-Syrian Palestinians of the Abu Musa faction said yesterday that they had won control of a Beirut refugee camp from guerrillas loyal to Mr Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Independent Palestinian sources confirmed that the Abu Musa guerrillas had made significant gains in a four-hour attack supported by artillery fire. They said that Mr Arafat's men had begun negotiations with Syria and its Palestinian allies on their safe withdrawal.

Rebuff for Reagan

Washington - In a sharp rebuff to the Reagan Administration, the Senate voted yesterday to require companies to give their employees 60 days notice before closing factories or ordering widespread layoffs.

The vote, by 72-23, points to a likely Senate override of the veto expected to be issued by President Reagan, who strongly opposed it as unwarranted government interference in business.

The plant-closing provision is the most important piece of legislation this year for American trade unions, and is strongly backed by Democrats, who see it as a vote-winner and plan to make it an election issue.

Tokyo stock controversy

Takeshita's aide named in scandal

From Brian Robins Tokyo

The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Noboru Takeshita, is facing his first serious political setback in the wake of an extensive stock trading scandal which developed here this week.

The scandal, involving several senior Japanese politicians, including prime ministerial hopefuls, broadened yesterday to include Mr Takeshita's secretary.

The affair is the worst since the time of Mr Kakuei Tanaka, the former Prime Minister. It has already spread to the staff of another former Prime Minister, Mr Yasuhiro Nakasone, the present Fi-

dal has threatened to throw off course plans by Mr Takeshita to complete a thorough overhaul of Japan's taxation system, which includes introducing a controversial 3 per cent consumption tax.

Even though reforming Japan's taxation system is fraught with political difficulties - two previous attempts have failed - Mr Takeshita's electoral popularity was thought sufficient to give him an excellent chance to pursue the reform successfully this time around.

Now that is in doubt. The Diet (Parliament) was to have discussed the tax reform issue at an extraordinary session scheduled to start next Monday. That has now been deferred indefinitely.

There is no suggestion whatever that Mr Takeshita, or any other senior government official, intends resigning over the scandal at this stage.

Mr Takeshita refuses to take any personal responsibility for the involvement of his secretary. He has also refrained from giving any details of his secretary's involvement, stating: "I was told not to mention them. I cannot say who asked him to buy (the stock). I also cannot say how the money earned from the stock sales was used."

Others involved, such as Mr Nakasone and Mr Miyazawa, either could not be contacted or refused to comment on the affair.

Details of the scandal first began to emerge earlier this year. Now it has emerged that during 1984 several senior politicians were also offered stock. In some cases Recruit Cosmos lent them funds so that they could conclude the transactions.

By buying the stock in Recruit Cosmos two years before it went public they have avoided any illegalities, though there is still the unresolved question of potential tax liabilities.

The scandal has resulted in the resignation of the president of Recruit Cosmos, Mr Hiromasa Ezoe, as well as of Mr Ko Morita, president of the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, publishers of Japan's respected economic daily newspaper.

Mr Morita, a friend of Mr Ezoe from university days, breached company policy by trading in shares.

In both cases they will continue as advisers to their respective companies.

Dukakis takes heart in Hellenic comfort

From Charles Bremner Boston

Boston's best-loved conservative kissed the archbishop, cracked a few jokes in Greek and saluted Euerpe, his proud mother, dressed in peach for the occasion.

Basking in the ecstatic applause of an all-Greek audience in Boston for the Orthodox Congress of the Americas, Mr Michael Dukakis switched to his ancient Hellenic mode on Wednesday night.

Those old Athenians knew a thing or two about conservatism, he said. "One of the things the Ancient Greeks gave us was something called the rule of law." President Reagan's team had ignored this but things will change



"next year, if all goes well and we have a son of Greek immigrants in the White House".

Whatever the Governor of Massachusetts says, it is a good thing Socrates is not around to review the quality of the debate. With a week to go before the Democratic convention in Atlanta and the election more than four months away, the big fight is over who merits the laurel of true conservative and foe of liberals.

In the weeks since he tied up the nomination, Mr Dukakis's claim has come unstuck. Mr George Bush and a Republican "truth squad" lately joined by President Reagan, have chipped away effectively



Mr Dukakis and Archbishop Iakovos admitting to being Red Sox fans at the Boston conference of the Orthodox Church.

at the image of Dukakis the worker of the Massachusetts economic miracle.

This week, as the Governor's increasingly hectic search for a vice-president appeared to home in on Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, opinion polls showed his national lead over the Republican candidate slipping to a handful of percentage points. Two months ago he was about 12 points in front.

Worse, in his home state, a poll this week showed sagging support for the Governor. Fifty per cent believe Mr Bush

would do a better job keeping down taxes, while only 22 per cent sided with Mr Dukakis.

Though the hometown candidate still enjoys an overall home-state lead of 14 points, his unfavourable ratings have doubled since January to a dangerously high 36 per cent - five points behind the Rev Jesse Jackson's.

The explanation is not hard to find. Since the Dukakis honeymoon ended, the national press and the Republican Party have homed in on his Massachusetts record while a state spending crisis

has weakened his pose as the perfect manager.

The Governor still mows his lawn with a hand-mower in Perry Street and he still travels to work on the suburban Greenline tram - albeit with a team of Secret Service bodyguards.

But the revised version Dukakis is no longer the frugal and shining fiscal knight. His opponents have been busy painting him as an ordinary liberal politician with a mean streak and a dangerous knowledge of all attitudes. With the revelation that he is worth \$1.5

million (£842,000) his poor immigrant claims have also been wearing a little thin.

President Reagan, finally throwing his weight behind his Vice-President, warned voters earlier this week that Mr Dukakis was campaigning as a "liberal incognito" and "all the promise of the future could be lost in just a few months".

Even some local Democrats have been getting at the self-confident Governor. "Everybody is with him," said a senior state legislator, "but whenever he stubs his toe

they're laughing. They're with him, but they don't like him. He's the know-it-all."

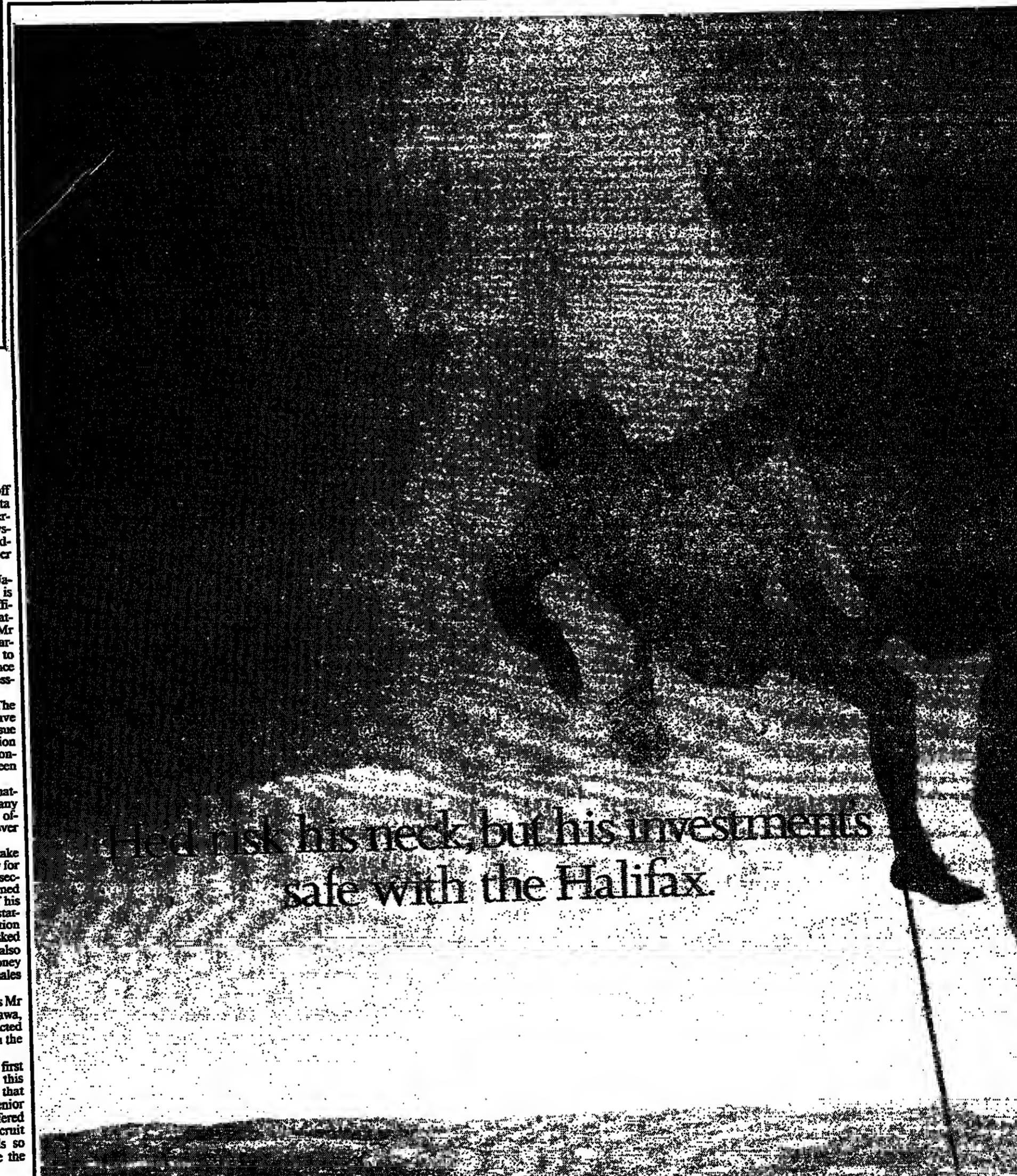
The Dukakis boasts about balancing budgets have added spice to Republican glee over the "taxachusetts" fiscal crunch. "My daddy told me to pay the hills," a favourite Dukakis boast, was being quoted by the Vice-President yesterday as he addressed the Greek Congress in Boston.

Massachusetts, like two dozen other states, over-estimated tax revenues this year and now finds itself short of \$472 million (£265 million). The Governor, forbidden by law to run a deficit, has opted for a tax on cigarettes among measures to close the gap. Since supporting tax rises is politically akin to backing child murder in this year's campaign, Mr Bush has been enjoying a field day.

The Republican, fresh from his "solemn oath" never to raise taxes, hauled out Mr Dukakis's pledge to do so only as a last resort. "Massachusetts has just experienced the last resort before they heard what the first one might be," said the Bush spokeswoman, Miss Sheila Tate.

The Dukakis staff say the Vice-President is trivializing the campaign with petty criticisms and the pendulum will swing back when his own record comes under scrutiny before the Republican convention next month.

Yesterday the Governor donned his white sheriff's hat again and set off on yet another tour through the Bush country of Texas and the South-west - mainly to hush his star as champion of law and order ahead of the Atlanta convention.



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THE WORLD'S NO 1



Mr Takeshita: Setback to planned tax reforms.

nance Minister, Mr Kiichi Miyazawa, and the Secretary-General of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Mr Shin- taro Abe.

A number of other senior Liberal Democratic Party members have been named.

In all cases the secretary to the minister or politician concerned has been implicated rather than the politician himself. In Japan is responsible for handling all donations which are carried out on behalf of the politician.

In each case in this affair, the politician bought shares in a property development company, Recruit Cosmos, in 1984, paying about 1,000 yen (some £4.40) a share.

The company went public in October 1986, and the shares were then sold for more than 5,000 yen each, giving the politicians a sizeable profit.

No firm estimates are available at this stage of the number of shares allocated to each politician, though in some cases profits of more than 20 million yen were made. In the short term the scam-

The shooting down of the Iranian Airbus

Explosive mix of failures that sent IR655 to disaster

From Robert Fisk, Bandar Abbas

The destruction of the Iranian Airbus with the loss of its 290 passengers and crew appears to have been caused directly by the technical inability of the passenger jet to receive the warnings of the American warship which shot it down and the consistent failure of the Iranian air traffic control centre at Bandar Abbas to take seriously the radio challenges of the US Navy.

But there is substantial evidence that despite the sophistication of the USS Vincennes — which shot down Iran Air flight IR655 on Sunday after being in combat with two Iranian boats — American naval personnel have proved to be ill-trained and inefficient, regularly endangering civilian air traffic over the Gulf through a combination of nervousness and ignorance.

Inquiries by The Times — including a night-time flight in the early hours of yesterday in the cockpit of the first Iran Air jet to travel from Bandar Abbas to Dubai since the tragedy, and repeated questioning of the senior air traffic controller at Bandar Abbas airport who was on duty on Sunday — has established that: ● Pilots on the Bandar Abbas-Dubai flight path have to spend so much time talking to ground control in three locations that for most of their journey they are physically

unable to hear any military warnings broadcast on the 1215 civilian air radio net; ● Iranian air traffic controllers at Bandar Abbas did hear daily warnings from US warships in the Gulf directed at ships and civilian airlines but ignored them consistently for political reasons and because of their regularity; ● Bandar Abbas airport controllers could have heard the last warnings of the USS

The Americans were near panic when in combat

Vincennes to the Iranian Airbus but failed to tell the pilot, Captain Mohsen Rezaian, of the danger to his aircraft;

● Captain Rezaian, who had flown the Bandar Abbas route to Dubai at least 25 times and had been piloting Airbus aircraft for almost 2½ years, did on many occasions talk to US warships over the Gulf while flying in the area;

● Airlines flying normal routes down the Gulf have been challenged regularly by American warship crews who have been unaware that they were sailing beneath an approved civilian air lane;

● On one occasion last year an American frigate stationed itself off the coast of the

United Arab Emirates and challenged every civil airliner preparing to land at Dubai international airport until the British air traffic controller on duty there told the warship that it was a danger to civil aviation and that Dubai would have to seek the assistance of the American Embassy if the warship did not obey orders to cease its radio transmissions;

● Helicopter pilots off the Gulf coast complained that American warships have challenged them on the wrong radio frequency. Shipping and aviation officials in Dubai believe that gunnery officers aboard the USS Vincennes must have had visual range of the Airbus on their television monitors in the last moments before firing.

At the centre of the drama lies a story of technical vulnerability, over-dependence by both Americans and Iranians on modern aviation safety procedures and an entire cultural and emotional gap between the US Navy crews and officials of Iran's state airline.

While the Americans sailed in constant fear of Iranian attack — "in a state of near-panic when in combat", according to a Western military specialist in the Gulf state — the Iranians had developed a blithe and almost arrogant



Flowers stand before the coffins of victims of the Iran Air Airbus disaster as mourners paid tribute yesterday outside the Parliament in Tehran before the funeral processions.

disregard for American warships in the Gulf.

Mr Hossein Pirouzi, manager of Bandar Abbas civil airport and the most highly trained Iranian traffic controller in the district, said: "They broadcast warnings every time they see a speeding boat — they go on 'red alert' when

they see every plane. The Americans have no right to be in the Gulf challenging our legitimate right to fly our air routes — so why should we reply to them?"

The destruction of Iran Air flight 655 has already produced some changes. Airline officials held a meeting yesterday with Iranian Air Force officers to work out new flight plans for their passenger jets to Dubai, while makeshift routes — taking the planes on a detour of up to 500 miles to avoid the USS Vincennes — have been drawn up.

When I travelled on the flight deck of the first Iran Air

passenger jet from Bandar Abbas to Dubai since the shooting down of the Airbus — our flight was numbered IR6550 with the delicate addition of a '0' to the doomed plane's number — we flew almost to Shiraz in southern Iran before turning south over the Gulf near Kish Island, at least 15,000 ft higher than the Airbus on Sunday.

On the Boeing 707's flight deck, Captain Assadpur was in almost continuous contact for the first part of our journey with Tehran, Bandar Abbas and Dubai controllers; he said that any US warship challenging an aircraft would have gone unheard on the civilian wavelength — to which we were tuned — during this period. Like the Airbus, the Boeing was operating on VHF transmissions — unlike the UHF in which the Iranians say the Americans sent their last warnings to the flight on Sunday.

Captain Assadpur and his exuberantly professional two flight-deck crew, all of whom spoke to ground controllers in impeccable English, constantly checked the bright green "transponder" light that proved our aircraft was sending its "Identify Friend or Foe" signal to ships in the Gulf which proclaimed we were a civilian airliner. We were not challenged by the Americans and were even

usually ordered on to the Dubai runway by a British controller.

But Captain Assadpur and his crew could not believe that Captain Rezaian could have flown without checking his transponder, nor that he would deviate from his flight path. Indeed Western aviation officials in Dubai insist that the Iranian jet was on course and that the American claim that the aircraft had deviated from its route was wrong.

Captain Nasser described Captain Rezaian as "a sensible, very professional man. He would never make a mistake or play games with the Americans." What the Americans did was very crude — they must have panicked.

Mr Pirouzi said yesterday that he had no idea that a naval combat had been taking place when the Airbus left: "We never let our planes take off when there is fighting. But they could not hear a warning on UHF, which the Americans must have known."

But Mr Pirouzi's account of the last minutes of flight IR655 contains no evidence that the Bandar Abbas control tower — which can receive UHF — passed on any warnings to the plane.

Western officials insist the jet was on course when hit

Herut's poll gives Levy leadership prospects a boost

From Ian Murray, Jerusalem

All three main contenders for the leadership of Israel's Herut party were able to claim victory yesterday after the 2,000 central committee members had ranked their 35 candidates for the November general election.

Mr David Levy was happy because he finished first and so kept his position as deputy to Mr Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister and party leader. He also saw six close supporters win places high enough on the list to be sure of Knesset seats.

Mr Ariel Sharon was happy because he finished second, beating his rival, Mr Moshe Arens. Only two of his supporters, however, can be confident of winning seats.

Mr Arens was happy because although he finished third he remains Mr Shamir's choice as his successor and because 11 of their supporters are certain to be returned.

The results of the complicated vote show that loyalty to one or other of the three camps was important rather than the ability of the candidates. The in-fighting demonstrated Mr Levy's skill behind the scenes in mobilizing support after finishing sixth in the vote a week earlier.

He had threatened to split the party if he lost his position as deputy, and Mr Shamir caved in to him. He then won the support of Mr Sharon's camp for his candidates, while his own supporters heavily split their vote to hamper both his rivals.

Ironically, Mr Sharon, whose controversial role in the invasion of Lebanon still arouses political passion in Israel, emerged as the compromise candidate for supporters of both Mr Arens and Mr Levy, who are bitter rivals. His personal popularity, however, did not help his supporters and he will have a thin power base inside the Knesset from which to challenge for the party leadership when Mr Shamir steps down.

Mr Arens has been weakened by the contest, having first backed out of a clash with Mr Levy and then coming in behind Mr Sharon. He will need all Mr Shamir's support if he is to stand a real chance of taking over as leader.

Mr Levy is probably happiest with the outcome, having won the deputy position almost by right and having seen enough of his supporters on to the list to give him the necessary political weight. He has already asked for the job of Foreign Minister.

Bus attacked: Mr Shamir yesterday seized on an incident in which two fire bombs were thrown on to the roof of a bus in west Jerusalem to hammer home the point he has been making for months that the Palestinian uprising was not about territorial demands but about "the very existence of Israel".

No one was injured and very little damage was done in the bus incident, but the attack, in a crowded shopping street and on the Jewish side, has brought home the message of the Palestinian intifada (uprising) in a much more real way than television news of the disturbances in the occupied territories.

Shadow of Pol Pot over peace moves

From Gavin Bell, Bangkok

The search for a peace settlement in Cambodia has entered a critical phase. A partial withdrawal of Vietnamese forces has boosted hopes of a breakthrough at an historic meeting in Indonesia later this month of all parties to the conflict.

They are clouded, however, by uncertainty over the conflicting peace formulas of Hanoi, the Phnom Penh regime it supports, and the tripartite coalition waging a guerrilla war against them.

The darkest shadow over the proceedings is the Khmer Rouge, whose four-year reign of terror in the 1970s resulted in the deaths of at least a million people. The one area of agreement between Prince Norodom Sihanouk, nominal leader of the resistance, and his adversaries is that the Khmer Rouge must not be allowed to regain power.

Various peace plans were considered by foreign ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) at their annual conference in Bangkok earlier this week. They are now being discussed at a three-day meeting with the United States, Canada, the EEC, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

A consensus has emerged on the broad outlines of an agreement, providing for a complete Vietnamese withdrawal, the deployment of an international peacekeeping force, and the formation of a provisional coalition government under Prince Sihanouk ending in free elections.

Hanoi has pledged to pull out all of its troops by the end of 1990, but it does not favour a "peacekeeping force". Nor does the Phnom Penh regime of Mr Heng Samrin, which is wriggling furiously to avoid being dismantled.

The Asean sessions are abuzz with speculation of concessions and secret deals. The erratic Prince Sihanouk astonished delegates this week by renouncing the key demand for a peacekeeping force, and then promptly changed his mind. A senior Western diplomat said that the Prince might be tempted to take a short cut back to power by throwing in his lot with Heng Samrin, and some of the less murderous Khmer Rouge leaders.

"Providing elections were held, and the Vietnamese were out of it, most of us could live with that kind of set-up. It... may be the best we can hope for."

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Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page: "هذا هو الاصل"

Mexican opposition demands inquiry into ballot 'fraud'

From Alan Robinson, Mexico City

The three main opposition candidates in Mexico's federal elections on Wednesday say they will not recognize a government led by Señor Carlos Salinas de Gortari, presidential candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, unless "numerous cases of fraud" are investigated and the results reversed.

Amidst the turmoil, Señor Salinas was declared winner by his own party's count.

Hours after voting closed, Señor Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, of the National Democratic Front, Señor Manuel Clouthier, of the National Action Party, and Señor Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, of the Mexican Workers Party, spent a couple of stormy hours with Señor Manuel Bartlett, the Interior Minister, who is also president of the National Electoral Commission.

Afterwards Señor Ibarra, who acted as spokesman, told a large crowd of supporters and journalists the opposition demanded that "if legality is not restored to the electoral process", they "would not accept the results nor recognize the authority conferred by fraudulent practices".

Señor Bartlett later rejected the accusations, which he said were not backed by evidence. The election had been "a clean and open one with few irregularities". The opposition was trying to "jump over the law and declare the election illegal, behaviour which violates all civic and political norms", he said.

The Minister's statement,

made in a 3 am session of the National Electoral Commission, led to a bitter and acrimonious debate that went on through the night.

The opposition parties have listed several hundred cases of electoral fraud and say they have the evidence to prove each one.

Meanwhile Señor Jorge de la Vega Domínguez, leader of the PRI, said the party had won and that Señor Salinas's victory was "legal, beyond doubt and overwhelming".

But the National Democratic Front calculated that Señor Cardenas had won in 14 states. The National Action Party said Señor Clouthier had won in seven. That would leave only another 11 states for the PRI. All claims, however, must be verified by the commission, which has to make its own counts.

The election campaign has had its moments of low comedy, but finally slipped into slapstick on voting day.

The National Action Party procured an advance copy of the magazine *Impacto* on Wednesday morning, well before balloting started. The issue, which went on sale yesterday, reported that Señor Salinas had won the election and that the PRI had reached its target of 20 million votes.

There was a similar article in *Jueves de Excelstor*, a magazine published by *Excelstor*, the nation's principal daily, which also goes on sale on Thursdays.

Impacto, once a fierce right-wing critic of the Government, was taken over by PRI

sympathizers more than a year ago. The Interior Ministry ordered police to throw out the editor and some of his staff.

Halfway through the balloting, the Interior Ministry's computer lines failed and it was impossible to gather election data for which the electoral commission was waiting. Opposition members of the commission commented acidly that the computers in the PRI building did not fail. The Mexican Socialist Party said the Government was "preparing a colossal fraud".

Reports contradicted the claims of a clean and peaceful election published in the afternoon newspapers. Ballot boxes were stuffed, swapped, stolen and burned. In one case a whole voting station was burned down.

Opposition representatives were ordered out of stations by PRI officials, in at least one case at gunpoint. Groups of soldiers and sailors went from place to place voting repeatedly, as did gangs of civilians.

There was a gunfight after one man was found stuffing a score of votes into the box.

Voting stations were opened late, closed early, and PRI officials obstructed business or staged go-slows which drove people away after waiting for hours.

National Democratic Front and National Action Party members on the commission offered notarized proof of some of the charges.

The fraud row makes it uncertain when a final result will be declared.

Paraplegic Olympics protest as Seoul times conciliation move with Games



Handicapped protesters charging riot police in Seoul yesterday in an emotional demonstration against the South Korean Government's welfare policies and the Paraplegic Olympics to be held in the capital in October. Carrying banners reading "We will boycott the Paraplegic Olympics, which are being held just far show", the 200 protesters tried in vain to break through riot police deployed to stop them moving into central Seoul. The demonstrators dispersed after two hours, but reappeared in

smaller numbers in front of Seoul City Hall for more protests. There were no immediate reports of arrests or injuries. Among the protesters' demands were that the Government establish an agency to handle the affairs of handicapped people and introduce laws to promote employment schemes. "We are not against the Olympics, just the Paraplegic Olympics," said one protester, who added that the event should not be held in a country that did not know how to treat its own handicapped.

Roh wants era of co-operation with the North

From A Correspondent, Seoul

President Roh of South Korea, who has established a reputation as a man with a keen sense of public image, appears to have scored only a moderate public relations success with his first big policy statement on North Korea.

Yesterday's declaration, which called for an end to confrontation with the North and for a new era of reconciliation and co-operation, has been welcomed by all three opposition parties.

But the Seoul stock exchange lost ground, with investors said to be disappointed that Mr Roh had failed to produce any substantially new concrete proposals.

Policy towards the North is always a big political issue in the South. But Mr Roh's policy declaration comes at a time when the subject of Korean reunification had been highlighted by the approach of the summer Olympics - which Pyongyang is boycotting after its demand to co-host the games was rejected.

Foreign Ministry officials concede that one motive behind the timing of the declaration is the wish to create "a positive atmosphere" for the Olympics, and they describe the statement as a response to "the peoples' aspirations" for reunification.

Those aspirations were forcefully expressed in early June, in clashes between riot police and several thousand radical students protesting against the Government's re-

fusal to allow their leaders to meet a delegation of North Korean students in the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas.

The attempted meeting presented a big challenge to the Government, since commitment to reunification is an article of national faith in the South. The students have proposed another joint meeting in mid-August, and the latest policy declaration is in part a response to their challenge.

Exchanges and visits of students - as well as politicians, journalists, businessmen and others - will be actively promoted by the South in the future, according to the declaration. The statement does not mention the need for the two Governments to meet first, previously an essential point of policy.

But Western diplomats here also argue that the declaration should be seen as more than just a response to domestic pressures, particularly in its wish to abandon what it calls "counter-productive diplomacy" - shorthand for the obsession with vilifying and obstructing the North.

But while the declaration signifies a shift in policy style, there's little chance it will produce any sudden changes in the status quo.

One diplomat here observed that the declaration may have "a lot of wonderful words. But none of it will matter twopence if the North doesn't play ball."

Floods toll rises

Dhaka - The death toll in north-eastern Bangladesh climbed to 55 as 18 more bodies were recovered yesterday in submerged villages pounded by torrential rains (Ahmed Fazi writes). Water from the river Gumti burst a dam and destroyed bridges in the worst-hit region, the tea-growing Sumanganj district. About two million people have been marooned by the floods.

Diners stoned

Alanya, Turkey (Reuters) - At least 13 people were arrested after villagers shouting "Allah" (God) stoned diners at a restaurant near this southern Turkish resort, injuring two West Germans and six Turks.

Back to sender

Copenhagen (AP) - Denmark will return 10 containers of Soviet research equipment that dropped into the sea from a drifting balloon.

Off to Phobos

Baykonur (AFP) - Soviet technicians were putting the finishing touches to a powerful rocket due to lift off with a spacecraft that will be the first to land on Phobos, one of two Mars satellites.

One term

Lagos (AFP) - A six-year single term for the president, vice-president and state governors has been recommended in the draft of the Nigerian constitution.

Note case

Nairobi (Reuters) - A Nairobi court has sentenced Edward James Lewin, a British tourist, to three months in jail for mutilating Kenyan banknotes worth 190 shillings, about £6.

Bulls run

Pamplona (Reuters) - About 20 people were hurt, none of them seriously, as six bulls charged through Pamplona on the first day of the town's bull-running festival made famous by Ernest Hemingway.

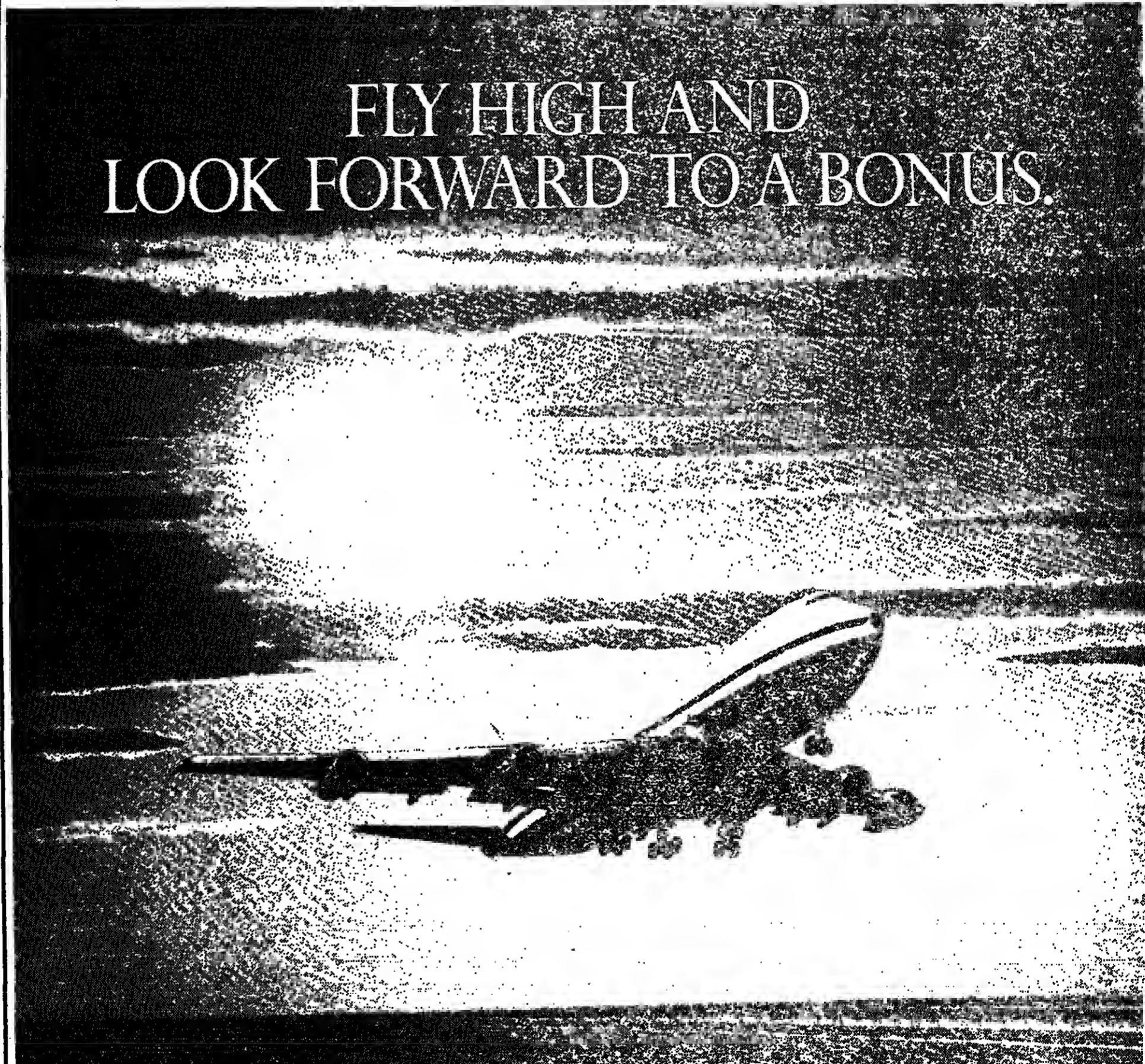
Rabuka rebuff

Sydney (Reuters) - Brigadier Sitiveni Rabuka, leader of Fiji's coup, can not visit Australia due to security reasons, Mr Bob Hawke, the Prime Minister, said.

Passenger ban

Paris (Reuters) - French pilots have been banned from carrying passengers on demonstration flights after last month's fatal crash of an Airbus at Mulhouse air show.

FLY HIGH AND LOOK FORWARD TO A BONUS.



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July 7 1988

PARLIAMENT

Destroyed oil rig was inspected last week

The Occidental oil rig, Piper Alpha, that had been destroyed by explosions and fire in the North Sea had had its most recent safety inspection only last week, Mr Cecil Parkinson, Secretary of State for Energy, told MPs.

Mr John Prescott, chief Opposition spokesman on the rig, offered deep sympathy to the families and all those involved in this tragic event.

He also expressed appreciation and admiration for the excellent rescue services provided in these most difficult circumstances as well as for the on-shore services provided by the police, hospitals and other services. It was a reminder of just how much those people contributed.

Considering the magnitude of this tragedy, the Opposition fully endorsed the decision to have a public inquiry. Did Mr Parkinson accept that this inquiry should be open and wide ranging so that nothing was excluded from its scope?

Would he confirm that the Health and Safety Executive would conduct its own in-

Would he confirm that the health and safety legislation did not fully apply to this industry? That highlighted the conflict between the department's responsibility for production as well as safety.

Would he now review that conflict of interest and consider whether the Health and Safety Executive should extend its powers to the North Sea industry?

Mr Parkinson said that the inquiry would wish to be wide ranging and to get at the fundamental causes and to make sure that, if there were any wider implications from this particular event and if there were any lessons to be learnt for other operators, that information was disseminated as quickly as possible. It would be a very deep and far-reaching inquiry.

It was not just the inspectorate of his department that attended the platforms. The inspectorate had finished the most recent inspection of this platform on June 28.

Lloyd's Register of Shipping also had a responsibility annually to certify the platforms and equipment. The Department of Transport also had to check the safety arrangements and the safety equipment on board.

On the question of whether his department should continue to carry out this work as agent for the Health and Safety Executive, this had been carefully examined by the Burgoyne committee which had reported in 1981.

In its majority report, that committee had said that the present arrangements were, in its opinion, the best possible. He accepted that there had been a minority report, which disagreed, but the majority report, whose recommendations the Government had accepted, felt that the present arrangements were the best.

Mr James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland, SLD) asked if the House could be given a further detail of the proposed inquiry.

Mr Parkinson said that the inquiry would be as full as possible, but the question of whether it should be conducted under Scottish or English law, or both, had to be resolved. Law officers were considering the point and the House would be told as soon as a decision had been made.

Mr Harry Ewing (Falkirk East, Lab) asked whether an inquiry would rule out the possibility of a fatal accident inquiry and what that had been discussed with the Lord Advocate?

Mr Parkinson said that the law officers were being consulted fully as to the relationship between the two legal systems. It did not necessarily follow that an inquiry under one would rule out the other.

In answer to a later question, he said that the platform had been a major producer, bringing up 120,000 barrels of oil a day.



RICHARD WILLSON

Mr Parkinson, who expressed the Government's deep regret at the Piper Alpha disaster

Children 'must come first'

The paramount protection must be given to the child in considering possible cases of child sexual abuse, Mrs Thatcher said during a question time.

Mr Richard Holt (Lang-baugh, C) The events surrounding the Cleveland scandal must never be allowed to happen again in this country. Those charged with taking action arising out of it must do so quickly and allow the people of south Cleveland to build their lives on the prosperity laid down so well over the past five years.

Mrs Thatcher: We all condemn child abuse and violence and must do everything we can to protect children from that, but at the same time we must make certain that false allegations are not made against parents or children who may be innocent.

It is easy to draw the line, but not always so easy for social workers and neighbours to see that they go on the right side of it.

No rise in homeless

There had been no increase, as far as the Government was aware, in the number of homeless in London, Mrs Thatcher said during question time. Numbers of places in hostels for the homeless were not taken up every night.

Mr Paul Boateng (Brent South, Lab) had told her that there were more people homeless and sleeping rough on the streets of the capital than in any other capital in Europe, except Istanbul.

Donkeys Bill

The Protection against Cruel Treatment Bill, aimed at improving conditions for horses, ponies and donkeys when they are tethered, completed its passage through the House of Commons on Tuesday.

Delors 'wrong'

The Prime Minister said during question time that she does not agree with M Jacques Delors, the President of the European Commission, who said on Wednesday that in 10 years 80 per cent of decisions on social and economic decisions now made by national parliaments would be made in Brussels.

Parliament today

Commons (9.30): Private members' Bills: Malicious Communications Bill, Access to Medical Reports Bill and Protection of Animals (Amendment) Bill, Lords amendments.

Rate support changed

The Government is to bring forward legislation to alter the basis of rate-support grant from April 1990, Mr Nicholas Ridley, Secretary of State for the Environment, announced in a statement.

The new system would provide for an orderly transition to the community charge, he said.

Payments under the new system and those for this year and previous years would be based on local authority figures with the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office at midnight last night.

Mr Ridley said that part of local authorities' capital receipts would have to be set aside for debt redemption or future capital commitments. They would be free to spend the balance and to finance additional capital spending from revenue.

For this and the previous three years, final supplementary RSG reports had not yet been made. The Bill would provide

that for all years up to 1988-89 grant should be calculated using total expenditure information which was with the Government by midnight last night.

Grant for 1989-90 would be based on a figure for each authority derived from their present levels of spending.

That would provide local authorities with greater certainty about their RSG entitlement for 1989-90 and previous years. Without the new legislation it would have been necessary to recalculate grant under the present system well into the 1990s.

Next year's RSG settlement for England would be £20.14 billion, 4.7 per cent or £1.3 billion more than authorities' budgets for this year. This included £110 million for the cost of preparations for the introduction of the community charge.

Aggregate Exchequer grant would be £13.75 billion, which

was about £600 million more than allowed for this year. "If spending is held steady in real terms this settlement will enable most authorities to hold the increase in rates to less than the rate of inflation."

Seven authorities would continue to be rascassed in 1989-90. They were Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Lewisham, Southwark, Thamesdown and Tower Hamlets.

WALESS: Mr Wyn Roberts, Minister of State for Wales, announcing the Welsh local government settlement for the period up to April 1990, said that the level for current expenditure provision would be set at £1.85 billion, or 5.1 per cent, or £87 million, more than authorities were budgeting to spend in 1988-89. The increase was above the level of inflation and would allow authorities to keep their spending in line with Government plans.

Government wants dolphin inquiry

The Government has asked the Danish authorities for an immediate investigation into reports of dolphin killing in The Faeroes. Mr John Gummer, Minister of State for Agriculture, said at a question that the practice was contrary to the law of The Faeroes.

He was replying to Mr David Shaw (Dover, C), who said that there was much appreciation of the work the Government had done to protect dolphins. What was it doing about recent reports that the Faroese were continuing to kill them?

ment was determined to do all it could to protect dolphins and small whales as well as larger ones.

Mr Calum Macdonald (Western Isles, Lab) said that there was a lack of knowledge about dolphins. Would the Government fund research into this?

Mr Gummer said that inshore dolphins were a matter for the Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr Nicholas Ridley). The Government was committed to the view that the depredations on these animals and whales in general had been wholly unacceptable.

Scots independence request rejected

The following report of a Commons debate on Scotland appeared in later editions yesterday.

A plea from the Scottish National Party for independence for Scotland was rejected by the Government and the Labour Opposition when put forward at the start of a debate initiated by the SNP.

Mrs Margaret Ewing (Moray, SNP) moved a motion that the Government had no mandate to continue to impose its alien values and divisive programme upon an unwilling Scottish population. The motion also stated that it was in the overwhelming in-

terests of the people of Scotland to seek full independent status within the EEC, rather than continuing colonial status within the United Kingdom.

Mrs Ewing said that, at the last general election, 76 per cent of the people of Scotland had voted for parties which were clearly committed to constitutional change.

Increasingly, decisions that affected the people of Scotland were taken in Brussels and Strasbourg. The future of Scotland lay by-passing London and going direct to Europe. Mr Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Scotland, said that independence was an issue

that the SNP had put to the electorate at the last general election. That had shown the SNP to be the least popular party in Scotland.

The suggestion that independence was a "cure-all" for economic and other problems had little to support it in the experience of the Republic of Ireland, which had 19 per cent unemployment and a gross domestic product only two thirds that of Scotland.

Mr John Maxton, an Opposition spokesman on Scottish affairs, said that he was reluctant to get involved in the wrangle between Scotland's two minority parties.

Aspirations of all its people. Federalism, with Scotland having its own parliament, was the only option for keeping the United Kingdom together. Scotland would disappear as a nation.

Mr William Walker (Tayside North, C) said that Conservatives had done badly in Scotland because they had failed to get their message over.

Mr Ian Lang, Minister of State for Scotland, said that devolution was irrelevant to the vast majority of Scots.

The motion was rejected by 206 votes to 5 - Government majority, 201.

Labour leader in southern Africa

Kinnock will press for sanctions on Pretoria

Mr Neil Kinnock last night left Britain for an 11-day tour of the frontline States of southern Africa, intending to highlight what he described yesterday as "the destruction wrought by South Africa and its attempt at imposing domination on half a continent".

Mr Kinnock, whose visit will start with a meeting in Lusaka today with President Kaunda of Zambia, left Britain with his personal popularity and that of his party at their lowest ebb since the general election.

Labour's fortunes have slumped since Mr Kinnock's last foreign trip, his tour of the Middle East in February, which was felt widely by his advisers and Shadow Cabinet colleagues to have been a considerable success.

The Labour leader will inevitably face more criticism for being away if further controversies blow up either in the House of Commons, in the traditionally volatile last month before the summer recess, or within his party.

He will miss the Kensington by-election on Thursday. But opinion is divided among Labour front-benchers and MPs about the wisdom of Mr Kinnock's leaving Britain for such a lengthy period at a time when the leadership contest is still running and when here are ample opportunities or his far-left enemies to make mischief.

policy, would have given an impression of panic and that in any case party leader will benefit from a break from the Westminster hothouse.

Mr Kinnock himself has long been committed to the trip, which he regards as another opportunity to boost his international stature and his knowledge of the world's trouble-spots.

He said yesterday that the biggest problem faced by the frontline states was the "violence and warfare and economic destabilization that the apartheid regime spreads across the region in its efforts to defend continued white minority rule by aggression towards its neighbours".

Mr Kinnock is to meet leaders in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique. He said the theme that would run through the trip was the fact that "getting rid of apartheid is as urgent a priority for the people of South Africa and Namibia themselves".

In key speeches in Botswana and Zimbabwe, the Labour leader will press the case for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa, and is not expected to hold back from condemning the Mrs Margaret Thatcher's opposition to sanctions.

Both speeches are already being given strong build-ups in the two countries, according to Mr Kinnock's advisers. He said yesterday that Labour would continue to fight "against the present Tory pretence that aid to the frontline states can be any substitute for effective action against apartheid".

Savimbi all dressed up to cut a diplomatic dash

By Andrew McEwen, Diplomatic Correspondent

Without his battle fatigues or familiar pearl-handled revolver on his hip, Dr Jonas Savimbi, head of the Unita rebel movement in Angola, cut an unfamiliar figure in London yesterday. Some who met him could scarcely conceal their surprise at his expensive formal suit.

In his suite at one of London's most expensive hotels, he was surrounded by aides who called him president while security men watched suspiciously. The effect was to remind visitors that Unita is a force with which to reckon. Without it any settlement of the Angola conflict would be meaningless.

Although Dr Savimbi did not admit as much, that is believed to be the main purpose of his most ambitious diplomatic foray in seven years. His visit to Britain was part of a swing through Western nations timed to make his presence felt before talks re-



Dr Jonas Savimbi, centre, arriving with his bodyguards at Chatham House in London.

sume in America next week. He has not been invited to the negotiations between the US, South Africa, the Angolan Government and Cuba - but he insisted yesterday that it was not his aim to take part at this stage.

Dr Savimbi was careful to say nothing which would of-

fered his sponsors, the United States and South Africa, but he implied that none of the four powers should assume that Unita will accept any agreement reached.

He reiterated his support for the talks, but criticized attempts to set a deadline. It has been suggested that agreement

should be reached by the 10th anniversary, in September, of UN Resolution 435, which provided for internationally supervised polls in Namibia. He said the situation was too complicated to be resolved quickly and that time pressure would lead to frustration.

Dr Savimbi appeared un-

troubled by demonstrations by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, which sees him as a South African surrogate.

Red paint was daubed on the door of Chatham House in St James's Square in London, when he addressed the Royal Institute of International Affairs, but he said: "It's nothing. We've used to that. No black leader is for apartheid. All those who have dealings with South Africa are doing it out of necessity."

He would not be drawn on his own view of the sanctions issue, nor would he say clearly how a future Angolan government involving Unita would treat the African National Congress.

There has been speculation about Dr Savimbi's abrupt departure from Washington last week and his subsequent talks in an unnamed African country. He appeared to be enjoying the mystery. "There is greater interest in talking to us than some people imagine," he said.

Afrikaners' church takes issue with war policy

From Michael Horshy, Johannesburg

The main white branch of the Dutch Reformed Church, to which more than 50 per cent of South African whites and 80 per cent of government members belong, has questioned on "Christian-ethical" grounds the justification for the country's military presence in Angola.

In a leading article in Die Kerkbode, the official organ of the church, Dr Fritz Gaum, the editor, asks whether South Africa would not be acting more ethically by withdrawing all its soldiers.

Referring to the "more or less permanent presence" of South African forces in Angola, Dr Gaum says there is a

danger that South Africa could become more and more deeply enmeshed in a conflict on foreign soil with a corresponding increase in loss of life.

Although expressed in somewhat oblique language, the article is the most public criticism so far of South Africa's military involvement in Angola from within the Afrikaner establishment. A military spokesman said yesterday that Die Kerkbode had overlooked "military-strategic interests and considerations".

The comment by the church paper was given front-page treatment yesterday in Beeld, the main Afrikaans morning newspaper in the Transvaal, which claimed that its views had been repudiated by Dr

Johan Heyns, the Moderator of the Church and a confidant of President Botha.

But Dr Heyns, denying the newspaper report sharply, later defended the church paper's article. "The questions raised in its editorial are perfectly legitimate," he said. "Those are the questions in the hearts of our people."

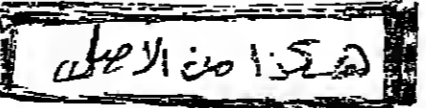
The Government might have its reasons for maintaining a military presence in Angola, he said, but the parents of servicemen "are entitled to ask whether this is necessary. Political and military considerations aside, we wonder whether the Government would not be acting ethically if it withdrew its troops completely."

Over recent months there

has been evidence of growing concern among the families of national servicemen about the scale of the conflict. Between 50 and 60 young whites have died since September. Casualties among black soldiers recruited in Namibia are believed to be much higher.

Military service is compulsory for white males. Most casualties are young Afrikaners, partly because Afrikaans-speakers are the biggest section of the white population and partly because more English-speaking families are in a position to send their sons abroad to avoid national service.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, head of the Anglican Church, was said to be watching the debate "with interest".



SPECTRUM

To turn gold bars into cash profits, a lawyer's cunning was needed. Stewart Tendler and Michael Horsnell explain his methods

Brink's-Mat: the bullion trail

At 6.40am on November 26, 1983 — a grey Saturday morning — a gang of armed and hooded robbers raided nondescript high-security warehouses near Heathrow Airport, London. Working on an inside tip, they stole £26,369,778, including 6,800 gold bars — after soaking guards in petrol and threatening to set fire to them. In 1984 Tony Black, the inside tipster, confessed, became an informer, and was sentenced to six years. He has now completed his sentence. Two of the robbers went to jail for 25 years.

In 1985: A detective was stabbed to death by Kenneth Noye, a suspect whose house he was keeping under surveillance. Noye was cleared of murder, after claiming that he was protecting his home and family. In 1986: Noye received 14 years for handling the bullion. Immediately after the robbery the South London underworld was buzzing with the immensity of the haul. Experts moved in to advise the robbers how to profit from their hoard. Half of the bullion — packed in shoe boxes — was buried and remains

undiscovered. The other half was resmelted and sold on the legitimate market (making an instant 15 per cent by the non-payment of VAT). The proceeds were then used in property deals which quickly produced assets probably worth more than the total haul. These are some of those who have faced the courts: ● Tony Black, the "inside man" at Brink's-Mat who turned police informer. Six years jail. ● Michael McAvoy, sentenced to 25 years for the robbery. Tried to give half

the gold back in a deal aimed at early parole. ● Brian Robinson, sentenced to 25 years. ● Tony White, acquitted of the robbery. ● Kenneth Noye, acquitted of murdering DC John Fordham, undercover policeman, but received 14 years for handling gold. ● John Palmer, nicknamed "Goldfinger", came back to Britain after spending 18 months in the Canary Islands, accused of playing leading role re-smelting gold. Acquired. ● John Fleming, returned to Britain

after being pursued across Europe and the Americas for three years. Accused of handling gold, but case thrown out by magistrate. ● Michael Relton, known as "the Champagne Man", a London solicitor and the brains behind the laundering operation. Found guilty yesterday. ● Brian Perry, mini-cab company owner, now facing a retrial. ● John Elcombe, antique dealer, acquitted yesterday. ● Stephen Donovan, property specialist, acquitted yesterday.

● Mrs Jacqueline McAvoy, the robber's first wife, now facing a retrial. ● Mrs Kathleen McAvoy, the robber's second wife, given £500,000 house. Acted as go-between in schemes to give back the money. Found guilty yesterday. ● Joseph Medayil, north London accountant, acquitted yesterday. ● Michael Osborn, car dealer, acquitted yesterday. Police still wish to interview: ● Gordon Parry, son of a south London bookmaker, businessman and partner with Relton.

THE PROPERTY DEALS

A new breed of crook

The Brink's-Mat trials have revealed a new style of criminal, skilled in laundering money and investing it profitably. Unlike the Great Train Robbers, most of whom ended up broke, the bullion robbers had contacts with professional advisers, property dealers and US crime syndicates.

Relton was shrewd enough to invest in derelict Docklands properties long before legitimate developers saw their potential. He also invested abroad and bought part of Cheltenham Ladies College to turn into luxury flats.

Underwriters are reported to have recovered more than £12 million from the sale of just two investments: Globe Wharf, bought for £1.6 million and sold for £8 million; and Cyclops Wharf, bought for £2.7 million and sold for £4.25 million.

In a third deal, New Caledonian Wharf was bought for £750,000 and quickly resold for £1.75 million.

About 30 property deals have been traced. Some brought unashamed luxury to members of the gang and their families.

Convicted bullion raid leader Michael McAvoy was able to treat his mistress handsomely, even though he was in jail serving 25 years. Kathleen Meacock (whom he later married in jail), moved from a council flat in Prioresse Street, off the Old Kent Road, to sumptuous Turpington Farm, now worth £500,000. The two Rotweilers which guarded her new home were called Brinks and Mat.

Purchases were carefully constructed so that investigators would find themselves

trapped in blind alleys created by banking and legal conventions, claiming client confidentiality. "We were dealing with some of the most adept, enterprising, violent and ruthless criminals in the country," says Brian Worth, deputy assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

They were men described by one observer as daunting specimens of the modern criminal: defiant, amoral, smart — known in professional robbery circles as "the meatiest team in the business". The Brink's-Mat trials revealed how easily large amounts of cash can be moved around the British and international banking systems, with few questions asked and few traces of the money's progress.

One bank accepted a suitcase full of money from a man who did not know whether it contained £400,000 or £500,000.

At an earlier trial Barclays were criticized for allowing millions to flow through a small West Country branch in highly suspicious circumstances without taking action. In this trial the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the Bank of Ireland, were singled out for attack by counsel.

The investigation into the robbery was the first one to use new search powers under the 1986 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), allowing police to examine bank accounts before making arrests. Although Relton's laundering had been astute, he failed to appreciate how PACE would change police investigation techniques.



A mistress's progress: Kathleen Meacock, who was to marry McAvoy in jail, went from the council flat in Prioresse Street, off the Old Kent Road, to sumptuous Turpington Farm, in Kent



Money makers: Relton shrewdly converted part of Cheltenham Ladies College into flats and invested in New Caledonian Wharf, in London's Docklands, before developers saw its potential



THE CHAMPAGNE MAN Lawyer turned launderer

The chilled champagne floated across the swimming pool on a tray and a man who had become a millionaire on the proceeds of the Brink's-Mat robbery reached down for a fresh glass.

Selective Estates — a company busily investing Brink's-Mat money in booming Docklands — was in informal session at the newly-acquired £600,000 Surrey home of Michael Relton, solicitor turned criminal. The scene was typical Relton style. He was known as "The Champagne Man" and dubbed in court as the launderers' "Chancellor of the Exchequer". He saw himself as a connoisseur of wine and food and always appeared in the dock impeccably dressed.

Relton, aged 50, of Chase Farm, Haslemere, Surrey, was educated at Westminster School, and became a successful London defence solicitor. He had offices close to Scotland Yard and had defended 36 police officers, losing only one case. Senior officers at Scotland Yard despised him,

suspecting that information he gleaned from police contacts was used to help criminals.

He began his career in 1961, mixing legal work with property development in Britain and in Florida. In 1970 the Law Society suspended him for six months for unprofessional activities with client funds. He ran "Briefs" wine bar opposite the Inner London Crown Court and had a share in a restaurant near Guy's Hospital.

His connection with Brink's-Mat came through Gordon Parry, a former Heathrow worker whom Relton defended in a cannabis trial in 1972. They kept in contact and in 1982 Relton gave up his practice and went full-time into property with Parry. Relton diverted profits for himself into a Swiss account he called "Asbestos Stiffing" — a private joke showing he believed the account to be fireproof.

There was also a Liechtenstein account called Moyet, it should have been Moët, his



Michael Relton: 12 years for handling the robbery proceeds

favourite drink, but the name was misheard.

Parry, now 42 and son of a south London bookmaker, had links with the bullion robber leader Michael McAvoy.

The court heard Parry described as a "confidence trickster with charm, charisma and a good nose for property... probably now sunning himself in Marbella or Brazil."

The former petty criminal moved from his terrace house in Royal Hill, Greenwich, to Crookham House, a 15th Century house with 48 acres near Chartwell, Kent, now worth £1 million. Parry paid cash for a £81,000 red Bentley which he called The Fire Engine and protected his home with a closed circuit TV security system.

He is still wanted for questioning.

THE RECOVERY

Loss adjusters busy realizing the assets of the successful laundering operation could end-up with a balance higher than the £26 million which was stolen. A series of civil actions has been launched for the recovery of the stolen bullion — or its value.

Already the identified assets have been estimated at between £18 and £25 million and police still hope that one day they will unearth the £13 million which remains hidden.

Eight High Court writs have been served against 50 defendants seeking not only recovery of the £26 million stolen, but also the profits from investments. Lloyds, who insured the gold, paid Brink's-Mat the full value promptly

and are now seeking to recover their loss.

The defendants include not only convicted criminals, but innocent parties like clearing banks which unwittingly handled the proceeds, and people who have been acquitted. (Civil claims can be pursued despite an acquittal.)

Those served with writs include Barclays Bank, Lloyds Bank, National Westminster Bank, the Royal Bank of Canada, the Union Bank of Switzerland and Johnson Matthey, the bullion dealers who consigned the gold to Brink's-Mat. The Johnson Matthey suit alleges they bought back some of their own gold, but the bullion dealers say they bought in good faith from legitimate sources.

THE BETRAYAL

Michael McAvoy, smouldering under a 25 year sentence while his mates were enjoying the good life, made a bid for early parole by offering to organize the return of half the bullion. But detectives authorized to negotiate with him in Leicester Jail discovered that McAvoy's associates refused to play this game.

Their attitude was cynically summed up in a selfish catchphrase: "Whoever has the GOLD makes the RULES."

McAvoy was livid at what he saw as a double-cross and issued a written threat from jail that anyone crossing him was "signing his own death (sic) warrant".

SCIENCE REPORT Solar-power tracks the buzz from Brazil

Miniature solar-powered lasers, so small that they can be carried aloft by individual honey bees, will soon be tested at the United States Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The plan is to fit the lasers to the notorious killer honey bees that are expected to invade Texas from Mexico early next year.

The project may sound like an eccentric attempt to add laser-armed insects to the arsenal of the US defence force. But the lasers are needed to help scientists track killer bees and learn more about their behaviour.

The killer bees are "Africanized" honey bees, hybrids of the African and European species of the honey bee,

which were accidentally released during a breeding experiment in Brazil in 1956. The experiment was intended to create a strain of bee that would combine the ease-of-handling of the European bee with the vigour of the African race. But instead it produced a monster race.

The resulting Africanized bees are extremely aggressive. In contrast to European bees, which can safely be placed out in orchards to help pollination, Africanized bees mount massive group attacks against anything that comes within a quarter of a mile of their homes. Victims of attacks commonly receive 30 to 40 stings per square inch of exposed skin, and may die as a result.

Africanized bees are also poor honey producers and swarm frequently, leaving their hives and building nests in the wild. There they compete with hive-kept bees for nectar. They may also take over commercial hives, rendering them unprofitable. And, to make matters worse, it is impossible to tell an Africanized bee from a European bee with the naked eye.

Since their release in Brazil, Africanized bees have swept steadily north, through Central America. They are now well-entrenched in southern Mexico and are expected to begin moving over the border into Texas early next year.

So far, no way has been found of stopping them. The US Department of Agriculture

is busy in Mexico searching out and destroying wild colonies of the Africanized bees. It is also releasing large numbers of European honey bee queens, in the hope that the Africanized bees will mate with the European queens and produce a gentler race.

That plan seems unlikely to succeed. During their 20-year odyssey from Brazil, the Africanized bees have already mated with the bee populations of nine nations. But they remain as aggressive and unproductive as ever.

New solutions have to be sought — and that is where the Oak Ridge National Laboratory comes in. Although the laboratory's prime concern is to build more efficient nuclear reactors, its In-

strument and Control Division welcomed the chance of putting its electronics expertise to work for the bee-keepers.

They were asked to help find a way to track individual honey bees so that their foraging and mating behaviour could be better understood and — with luck — controlled.

The researchers responded with an integrated circuit carrying an array of tiny solar cells that could power a minute infra-red semiconductor laser. The whole chip weighs just 35 thousandths of a gram, which is not enough to bother a bee in flight. The laser light can be detected up to a mile away by a ground-based telescope fitted with an electronic sensor. That will make it possible to track

and record the behaviour of individual bees even during mating, when they fly high in the sky.

And to help bee keepers keep killer bees at bay until a more permanent solution is found, Oak Ridge researchers have come up with an electronic device that can tell Africanized bees from European bees by the sound of their buzz. The research draws on the sound analysis techniques used to listen for abnormalities in the running of nuclear reactors. With the hand-held device, bee keepers should be able to pick out hives taken over by Africanized bees and mark them for destruction.

Alun Anderson
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MARTIN FLETCHER

The signs are that there will be no Cabinet reshuffle this September...

Others of the 1983 intake thought to be in with a chance are dry-as-dust Michael Fallon...

One minister who will not be losing sleep over the reshuffle is Wyn Roberts...

Roy Hattersley, who is being challenged for his job as Labour's deputy leader...

After their lacklustre general election campaign senior Tories talked incessantly of the need for a dynamic new party chairman...

BARRY FANTONI



I picked up a wheel clamp and two parking tickets. How about you?

Des Wilson, the former Liberal Party president, is now standing for the presidency of the SLD...

He tells us that in 1973 he fought a "sensational" by-election campaign in Hove...

The report jolted the Home Secretary into motion. He scurried to issue a statement promising action on all the Inspector's recommendations...

Las, following the recent death of Wilberforce, the Downing Street cat report the demise of 11 of Ted...

The tragic accident in the Piper oil field on Wednesday demonstrates beyond words the dangers inherent in offshore oil and gas production...

The environment is hostile. The product is explosive, the locations are remote, and management is hostile to any "challenge" to its authority...

While a piece of rotating machinery or an electrical problem may well be the cause of the

Roger Spiller puts a trade union view of the Piper Alpha tragedy

Making the oil rigs safer

initial explosion, the fact that it occurred at all is a reflection of the work that still needs to be done.

The situation today might well be different if more attention had been paid to the evidence of the union representatives on the 1980 Burgoyne Committee into offshore safety...

Unlike onshore installations, those offshore are not required to have a health and safety committee. It is time they were given equal protection...

There is no doubting the companies' good intentions concerning health and safety but

their attitude to the unions on this issue weakens their defence. For example, earlier this year Shell was fined at Bow Street magistrates court for the absence of a piece of medical equipment...

In agreeing to a ballot on recognition of the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union, Shell excluded health and safety from the issues which could be discussed...

The union representatives on the Burgoyne committee particu-

larly drew attention to the possible conflict of interest arising from the Department of Energy having responsibility for both production and safety in an industry which has major significance for the British economy...

industry should be passed completely to the Health and Safety Executive. Adding that the unique aspects of offshore operations were frequently over-stressed...

The experience of the Health and Safety Executive and its Inspectorate is second to none. It covers almost all health and safety issues onshore...

winter and there are rumours that all these vessels are to be withdrawn as they are no longer considered to be "economic".

First City estimates of the cost of Wednesday's disaster are that the shutdown in production in the five fields surrounding the Piper Alpha platform will decrease output by 14 per cent...

Gradually the oil companies are recognizing the value of well-informed and trained union representatives. What we bitterly resent is the death or injury that has to occur to persuade them of the justice of our case.

Our deepest sympathies go out to the families and friends of those injured or killed. At the same time we demand that the Department of Energy and the oil companies take a responsible position and put the lives of their employees before Britain's balance of payments or the pursuit of profit.

© Times Newspapers, 1988. The author is offshore organizer for MSF.

Francois Heisbourg

Europe's own Nato pillar

Today, as in previous decades, the defence of Western Europe and of the United States is difficult to conceive without a substantial physical US conventional and nuclear force in Europe within the framework of a political-strategic alliance.

The lessons of geography - Western Europe's lack of strategic depth - and of history - the cost of late US intervention in the First and Second World Wars - point in that direction.

But this is only a necessary condition for European and American security, not a sufficient one: a successful future for the Atlantic Alliance depends on a higher degree of European involvement in defining and creating the conditions of its own security within the Alliance.

The same applies to Western Europe, where the unease created by American conduct at the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath combines with the understandable desire for a greater say in security affairs.

Such an exercise need not necessarily signal a major revision of the political bases of the Alliance: after all, the first Harmel report is a robust document which may simply require an update.

After the rethinking we need institutional reform of Nato. For a variety of reasons France will not rejoin its integrated military commands yet it proclaims the existence of a single European "strategic area"...

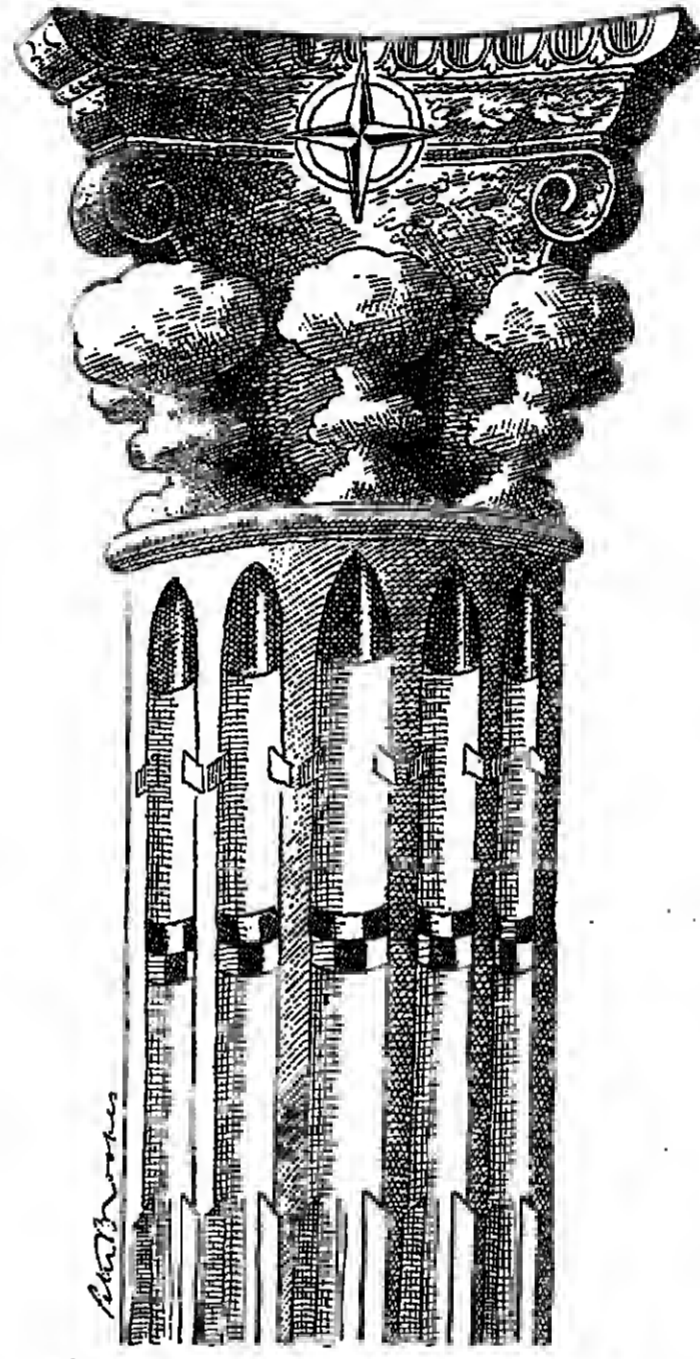
interests are some of these achievements. Although they are not unimportant in themselves, they remain nevertheless modest in the overall picture.

Four pragmatic steps, achievable within a relatively brief time span (three or four years) could produce such an acceleration.

The challenges of the present age should compel the Atlantic Alliance to embark on a rethinking of its political aims and strategy: such an exercise should be undertaken at the political level and cover the same sort of ground as the Harmel report of 1967...

This kind of proposal, much criticized by parroted by major foreign policy practitioners, is even more necessary today than its predecessor was in the mid-1960s...

Such an exercise need not necessarily signal a major revision of the political bases of the Alliance: after all, the first Harmel report is a robust document which may simply require an update.



the existing separate forum, the Defence Planning Committee (DPC) on which France does not sit. The bodies now run from the DPC would go back to the Council, with various forms of French involvement.

Since the three principal European countries will be forced, in the next few years, to embark on fundamental reviews of their defence priorities, these should be co-ordinated...

Commentary • ROBERT KILROY-SILK

The shame of Risley

The report by Judge Stephen Tumim, Chief Inspector of Prisons, on Risley Remand Centre in Cheshire is devastating, amounting to a virtual condemnation of the whole institution.

The conditions, he says, are "squalid", "totally unacceptable" and should be "wholly condemned". All the male wings are "profoundly depressing" with an "aggressive physical environment" and an "overall lack of human dignity".

The Inspector says that prisoners spend too long in their cells, have no purposeful activity and that visitors are treated discourteously...

Las, following the recent death of Wilberforce, the Downing Street cat report the demise of 11 of Ted...

in fact, will be found not guilty and many others will be convicted of an offence deemed by the courts to be insufficiently serious to warrant a prison sentence...

What is important now is that action of some kind is actually taken. While it would be churlish not to welcome Mr Hurd's placatory response, it must be said that he and at least his four predecessors could have acted years ago to remove this blight from our penal system...

How else, after all, did that particular institution come to be called "grisly Risley"? It was a grisly place when I visited it some years ago. As I reported to the then Home Secretary, it was grossly overcrowded...

Others drew attention to the squalor. In 1986, the Prison Officers Association called on the Home Secretary to take "urgent action to prevent this 'huge stick of dynamite' from exploding into violence that would endanger the lives of prisoners and staff. The riots

that were prophesied occurred, even among women prisoners. It is true that some improvements were made. The number of prisoners was slightly reduced, but none of the changes was sufficient. Nor, I suspect, will those resulting from the current condemnation. The fact that Judge Tumim's condemnation - except that relating to the prevention of suicide - has been made for years is a reflection on the inadequacies of the monitoring of prison conditions...

Even the official system of inspection is inadequate. However thorough and professional investigations may be, and they are both, they are not carried out often enough. Originally it was intended that every penal establishment would be fully inspected at least once every five years - at the rate of 24 a year. Not that many, yet in 1983 even that figure was reduced to 12 and raised only to 14 the following year after considerable pressure on the Government.

The result today is that the lazy, sloppy and uncaring management who unhappily exist in some of our prisons can relax in the knowledge that their turn to be "turned over" by Judge Tumim comes but once every eight to ten years.

Inspections must be more frequent. That means the Inspec-

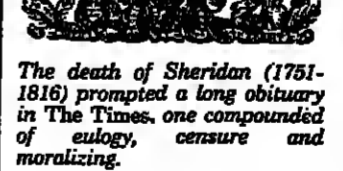
torate must be given more money and manpower. The Home Secretary should not need to be prodded to do the right thing. But obviously he does. Otherwise why did he await the Inspector's report to tell him what he already knew before taking even the limited action that he has?

We clearly cannot rely on the Home Secretary to be the guardian of prisoners' rights. Other means are needed, and they are available. One would be to institute a better complaints procedure for prisoners...

One day it will happen. In the meantime, the least we could do would be to agree that prisoners, whatever other disadvantages they might have to suffer, ought to be given unadulterated food and live in hygienic conditions.

If the Government will not set the Ombudsman loose, it should send in the environmental health officer. It will be a small step towards the "openness of mind and approach" to our prisons promised by Willie Whitelaw and towards a more civilized state.

JULY 8 ON THIS DAY 1816



The death of Sheridan (1751-1816) prompted a long obituary in The Times, one compounded of eulogy, censure and moralizing.

MR. SHERIDAN

It is with deep regret we announce to our readers the death of the Right Honourable RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN...

The astonishing talent for observation, and knowledge of character, displayed by Mr Sheridan in his dramatic writings, will surprise us more when we recall that he composed The Rivals whilst yet a boy...

If we pursue Mr Sheridan into political life, we shall have equal cause to admire the vigour and versatility of his genius. The field on every side of him was occupied by the ablest men who had appeared in Parliament for more than half a century...

Your point about the "uniform" and "efficiency" of the DES will be welcomed by a majority of those gov-

He distinguished himself amongst them by wielding with success the various weapons for which they were respectively celebrated. In flow of diction he yielded not even to Mr Pitt - in force and acuteness he might justly be compared with the great Opposition Leader...

It has been made a reproach by some persons, in lamenting Mr Sheridan's death, that "his friends" had not done more for him. We freely and conscientiously declare it as our opinion that had Mr Sheridan enjoyed ten receiverships of Cornwall instead of one, he would not have died in affluence...

The fact is, that a life of conviviality and interdependence seldom favours the cultivation of those better tastes and affections which are necessary to the existence of intimate friendship...

We have now performed an honest duty, and in many particulars an amusing and most distressing one we have found it. Never were such gifts as those which Providence showered upon Mr Sheridan so abused - never were talents so miserably perverted...

The behaviour of the Government during the last few days in West...

The behaviour of the Government during the last few days in West...

OIL TOO The behaviour of the Government during the last few days in West... School govern...

THE ARTS

Blatant murder

"She equates incomprehensibility with stature", said Gerald (Deo-holm Elliot), the senior civil servant in David Mercer's 1968 play *Let's Murder Fivally* (BBC1), as he described the qualities of his would-be mistress, Julie (Glenida Jackson) to his wife, Monica (Gwen Watford).

Once, incomprehensibility was almost equated with stature in television drama. Now, excepting for noble oddities such as *The Singing Detective*, rote espionage obscurities, and a certain vogue for actors mumbling, much television drama is only too obvious, even without publicity hand-outs, interviews and protesting MPs labouring a play's unmissable points before it is shown.

TELEVISION

over-played figure, the drunken writer. *Let's Murder Fivally* attempted to revive an even more well-worn subject, sexual infidelity. The twist this time was that the avowed exploits of Gerald proved to be hot air.

Of course, the wife knew all along: "You're a dedicated, bewildered wreck with pathetic sexual fantasies that are paralyzing you out of your wits." The crude sub-Freudianism of some of the knife-play was embarrassingly dated, but the wit and brio of Mercer's dialogue, and the distinguished cast carried the day.

The last programme in the series *Exiles* (BBC2), about the brilliant Paris-based Iranian photo-journalist Abbas gave us a fascinating view of a clash of cultures. The first programme in the new series *Esther Interviews* (BBC1), in which Esther Rantzen interviewed that self-confessed and successful "people pleaser" Mary Tyler Moore gave us a fascinating view of a clash of teeth. It was very brave of Ms Rantzen to do a face-to-face with someone with even more, if straighter, dental charms, especially when they were set in an apparently unaging surround.

Andrew Hislop

From the frenzy of New York's first international arts festival, Holly Hill extracts a message of hope Underdogs bark back

NEW YORK THEATRE

Good times, bad times. The First International New York Festival of the Arts gave an ecstatic welcome to its stellar Broadway attraction, Joe Dowling's Gate Theatre production of *Juno and the Paycock* (Golden Theatre), in the same week that five Broadway shows folded. Just across the street from *Juno*, Judy Kuhn, David Carroll and Philip Casnoff - the electrifying young talent who made the American version of *Chess* terrific entertainment - sang the show's 68th and last performance.

It might not have happened. At the press preview of *Carrie*, two critics from prominent daily newspapers had the following exchange: "Now aren't you sorry you panned *Chess*?"

"I was just thinking that, if only I'd seen this first, I would have enjoyed *Chess* so much more".

While the usual post-Tony Awards fallout was occurring (the closed shows also included *Macbeth*, the new plays *A Walk in the Woods* and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, and the long-running *Fences*), the Arts Festival, founded by American Express and overseen by producer Martin E. Segal, boasted some 350 cultural events in more than 55 locations around New York. It will be some time before their overall success can be judged, but scurrying between events during a heat wave, exhausted critics who have never had to cover Edinburgh agreed that it was a hot time in the old town indeed.

Ireland clearly took top honours with Barry McGovern's *I'll Go On* (Newhouse Theatre), and with *Juno*. Also earning kudos were Poland's *Cricot 2* Theatre and the Leningrad Maly Drama Theatre. Tadeusz Kantor's *I Shall Never Return* (La Mama E.T.C.) may be the director's farewell, not only because it contains references to his previous works and can be seen as an evocative, nightmarish summation of Polish history, but also because Kantor is an active figure in the piece. He carts



Coffin carrier: Tadeusz Kantor's summation of Polish history, *I Shall Never Return*, may be his farewell

around his own coffin, watching his apparitions of tyrannical and tyrannized people, draped in black, crumble in the end. The Maly troupe, whose original offering of *Brothers and Sisters* was cancelled due to funding problems, sparked interest in return visits with *Stars in the Morning Sky* (American Place Theatre), a

sardonic and poignant play by Alexandr Galin about prostitutes exiled from Moscow during the 1980 Olympic Games.

Among the disappointments of the Festival was the Broadway repertory of *Long Day's Journey into Night* and *Ah Wilderness!* (Neil Simon Theatre). Eugene O'Neill's tragedy and comedy

about his real and his idealized family. Starring Colleen Dewhurst and Jason Roberts Jr as both sets of parents, the plays had a touching resonance when seen together but fell far short of being the definitive productions hoped for as America's official contribution to O'Neill's centenary. Most of the 25 offerings I have

"Critics agreed that it was a hot time in the old town indeed"

seen in three weeks have ranged between the purely pedestrian and the plain awful - in other words, par for the course. To the degree that enjoyment of a gruelling marathon is possible, I particularly appreciated encountering the foreign companies never seen here before. Among these was one non-Festival event - Ingmar Bergman's stunning *Hamlet* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Notable as a home-grown, non-Festival event is a revue of 29 skits and songs at the Manhattan Theatre Club. MTC asked a variety of writers to contribute "a scene about whatever it is that makes you laugh or cry or makes you angry about living today."

The result is a jolly two hours and discards thirty minutes whose highlights include a hilarious Ted Tally dialogue between a New York taxi driver whose understanding of English is limited and a frustrated rider, a wicked sketch of arch-conservative Cardinal O'Connor by (who else) Christopher Durang, and a robbery victim's wry reflection on possessions by Arthur Miller.



Musical mission: Ravi Shankar

Time to forget the flower children

Simon Tait meets Ravi Shankar, due to play at an Asian festival in Britain next week

When Ravi Shankar arrives for his annual London concert these days there is little of the idolatry which greeted him 20 years ago. Then, battalions from the army of love-loving Beatles fans had adopted the sitar virtuoso after George Harrison decided to learn the instrument. At first he was delighted, then appalled.

"The whole issue was most distressing for me," says the 68-year-old pandit, as he is respectfully known now. "I hoped it was the chance to bring our music to a new audience, but I was like some superstar for people who had no real love for our classical music."

When he began giving the performances 32 years ago it was to a rather select audience of British aficionados at the Wigmore Hall; then, in the second, "beat" phase, to the Flower Children who seemed somehow to have got him confused with the Maharishi. "For three or four years there was this superficial audience who did not really gain much understanding of the music."

His mission to bring the classical India to the West faltered. His Barbican audiences are now largely white, British and middle class again, but with a growing new element: "Now I would say the audience is 30-35 per cent Asian, and they come for the music."

Even without the backwash of Beatlemania, Ravi Shankar's popularity has steadily grown over the years. He globe-trots, still finding time to serve in India's version of the House of Lords to which he was appointed in 1986. Usually there is no time for more than one two-night visit to Britain a year.

But the pandit has a new mission. He is back again for an unprecedented second visit for *Nayee Kiran* (Hindi for New Ray of Light) which is a week-long event beginning on Monday. "It has never been tried before, a festival of South Asian music and dance in England, and I want to help where I can."

His contribution will be a master class followed by a concert. "Young Asian people here have no idea of their own culture and I hope this festival will begin to put that right," he said.

Nayee Kiran unexpectedly takes place at the new Hawth arts centre in Crawley, West Sussex. It is an attempt to establish a permanent niche in the British arts scene for the music and dance of South Asia.

The idea came when Sukanya Kotiyar took her British-born daughter, Anoushka, aged six, to Madras's 10-day arts festival. Sukanya does this every year to help Anoushka understand her roots. Last year she met Crawley's arts administrator, Keith Lancing, there.

"We thought how exciting it would be if an event could be staged in Britain to celebrate the work of performers here, for parents who can't take their children back to India as I can, and to provide a platform to help bring Asian music and dance out of the exotic closet and into the mainstream arts scene in Britain." Keith Lancing, married to an Indian, has been organizing tours and community-based concerts of South Asian music and dance for six years.

Ravi Shankar sees an opportunity for a fourth phase of his cultural crusade to the West. "I would like *Nayee Kiran* to be something which will swell thinking, as being something which will enlarge the awareness of all Asian people in Britain, something which is relevant to a multi-cultural English audience, and be good for all communities."

Nayee Kiran will be at The Hawth, Crawley, West Sussex (0293 553636) from July 11 until July 17.

LONDON DEBUT

Janice Weber St John's, Smith Square

The New York pianist Janice Weber made her British debut with a stupendously heroic programme delivered to a stupendously under-populated hall. Never mind: Miss Weber infused Ives's First Sonata and Liszt's *Transcendental Studies* with a spirit and imagination which will surely attract larger crowds when she returns to London.

The Ives was particularly admirable, for this piece is a monumental mesh of quirky counterpoints and gritty progressions which sometimes jostle uneasily with weirdly distorted treatments of banal tunes like "What a friend we have in Jesus".

Miss Weber illuminated the complex textures intelligently, caught the kaleidoscopic shifts in mood, and made a credible stab at the ferocious technical requirements.

Unusually, she offered the second (1838) version of the *Transcendental Studies*, which she swept through with great verve, though the slow studies could have been more subtly coloured. The whole recital was delivered from memory, and Miss Weber (as befits the author of two novels) provided some exceptionally lively programme-notes. However, her pen is not mightier than her chords.

Richard Morrison

A little out of balance

CONCERT

LMP/Glover Queen Elizabeth Hall

Enterprising and well intentioned though it has been, the London Mozart Players's "Two Decades" series has perpetrated an illogical imbalance. Was the inclusion in each concert of three works from the 1780s to just one from the 1980s a statement or a judgement? This final concert also cultivated the phenomenon of the naive programme note, which would have had us believe that "the system of related harmonies" was abolished in the early 20th century and implied that composers have only recently taken again to writing music intended to be listened to. While Robin Holloway's *Idyll* of 1979-80, does fall easily on the ear, that is no infallible mark of lasting quality.

Apart from the occasional predictability of its sequences, *Idyll* is a finely crafted piece, not at all the lazy Delian pastorate suggested by its title. Its longer, fustian second section involves the "unlocking" (Holloway's description) through linear development of the static fragments first exposed in the opening slow music. As usual in Holloway's work



Jane Glover: relished challenge

there is a clearly defined tonal centre, alluded to throughout by the use of pedal notes, but clinched convincingly in the coda and emphasized at the end with a blatant tonic chord. This is music that flows unaffectedly and idiomatically.

Jane Glover conducted an obviously well-rehearsed performance, with her team of young players clearly relishing the challenge. They were neither as invigorating nor as acutely responsive in the 18th century repertoire, despite the refreshment offered by Dittersdorf's vaguely programmatic, Ovid-inspired symphony. "Action transformed into a stag" or by the more familiar *Symphony No 84* of Haydn. And admirably cultured and restrained though it was, John Lill's performance of Mozart's A Major Piano Concerto, K414, would have benefited from crisper attack and more varied tonal colours.

Stephen Pettitt

Absence of kindness

LONDON THEATRE

Big Time Gate, Notting Hill

Keith Reddin belongs to a generation of American playwrights newer than Mamet and Richard Nelson but no less adept at jabbing a finger into his country's sores. In this 90-minute play, he finds the ethical void in the heart of a young ambitious businessman.

The incidents in Paul's rise, pause, and resumed rise emerge in the course of about a dozen short scenes set in various well-heeled New York and Washington addresses, and a Middle Eastern jail.

It is here that he is offered, could he only recognize it, a chance to mend his ways. Captured by triumphant revolutionaries at a moment when he is trying to extricate his bank from a commitment to the former regime, Paul is asked by his captor (Commer Akhtar) if there is anything he would be prepared to die for.

Until now, Stephen Hoye's faultless performance has been showing us the neat, confident money man, always well spoken, seldom altering his intonation. But now his face is puzzled, and even his sweat appears to be doing the unendurable and getting out of control. He frowns as a thought stirs that really there must be something for which he might



By the word divided: Stephen Hoye and Sharva Holm in *Big Time*

sacrifice his life. "I don't know", he answers.

Reddin is especially good on the deadening absence of kindness in his characters. "You need a haircut," says the prissy colleague (Johnny Myers) come to ransom Paul from the revolutionaries. "We paid a lot of money for you; the least you can do is look good on television."

When Paul returns to his New York apartment and goes so far as to disclose a genuine human feeling, his former girlfriend (Sharon Holm) quietly lets herself out of the door so as not to listen.

There are little faults in the play: his sexual rival Peter, nicely played by John Cagan, is a photo-journalist, and his concern to take

good pictures of dying terrorists is too glib a confirmation of the play's theme.

It is apt that the longer speeches should be devoted to events distanced from real life: the plot of some trivial film, for example, or the bizarre deaths in the family of a cool PR girl. Erin Donovan makes this catalogue of disasters grotesquely funny, but she should not be asked to follow it with a second chapter.

Toby Reisz's fine direction makes sure the lines have room to show their meaning. The occasion is a notable achievement for the Gate and Reddin, a new talent to watch.

Jeremy Kingston

LONDON'S NEW BALLET THEATRE AT THE BUSINESS DESIGN CENTRE - ISLINGTON

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CLASSICAL CHOREOGRAPHY including Pas de Six from La Esmeralda The Dying Swan Pas de Deux from Le Papillon
PAQUITA

BALLET SPECTACULAR 2 August 4, 5 at 7.45 pm August 6 at 2.30 pm & 7.45 pm

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FRIDAY PAGE

'The problem facing us now is a philosophical divide'

The story of "Samantha" appears on page nine of Lord Justice Butler-Sloss's report. Samantha's mother died when she was very young and her father abused her sexually from about the age of four. There does not seem to be a perversion available that was not forced on the girl, who was made to say that she "enjoyed it". As the years went by, it became a formula. "If I wanted a favour, to go out with a friend, or buy a new pair of shoes, I had to let him do it first."

simply because she took the baby to hospital over a spot of constipation and bumped into Dr Marietta Higgs? The Butler-Sloss report is, frankly, a most bewildering affair. One year after the events in Cleveland it still gives no figures on how many criminal charges were laid or convictions obtained. Nor is there any clear analysis of the evidence that caused these children to be taken from their homes. We understand that the reflex anal dilatation test (RAD) was a sufficient cause for 18 children to be placed under care orders and a necessary cause to investigate the rest, but Butler-Sloss now says RAD "is not in itself evidence of anal abuse". Surely it is scandalous if, solely on the basis of this discredited diagnostic technique, 18 children were taken from their homes?

seem unlikely to have been productive, particularly as even today she stands by her procedure. In the end, I suppose, the chastened, cap-doffing British parents would eventually have turned into a lynch mob and taken the matter into their own hands. The report has an almost cinematic inevitability as events unfold. Cleveland County Council Social Services Department creates the new post of Child Abuse Consultant. Mrs Sue Richardson takes the job. New committees and working parties are set up to examine the problems. Higgs meets Richardson in one such group. Predictions of increased detection of sexual abuse are made and sure enough this is soon happening. Underneath the burgeoning problem is the dispute over the RAD test, but Richardson "did not recognize the importance of the test" according to Butler-Sloss. It is virtually on this slender reed alone that Butler-Sloss dismisses a conspiracy between Richardson and Higgs. But as the story unfolds the conclusion seems curiously



BARBARA AMIEL

at odds with what has been revealed by the narrative. Police and parents are blocked at every turn as they try to see the children; dissenting physicians are no longer asked to give second opinions; the controversy over the RAD test is buried. And when second opinions are insisted on Dr Jane Wynne, the author of RAD testing, is consulted. The circle is complete. Discussions of this report are perilous, I think, in part because one does not want to be seen as sending a message that child abuse does not exist or that where it does it should not be a matter of the strongest censure. But there are difficulties here. In spite of its own statement that there is no way to determine the number of child sexual abuse cases, the report makes the implicit assumption that abuse is a major and increasing problem. It is this assumption that justifies the sort of measures that their advocates might otherwise not tolerate. One would expect, for example, that the only

circumstances under which a child should be taken from its parents when there is no complaint on the part of the child or a third party, should be when the evidence is strong enough to convince the court. My own view is that the problem this report highlights is not child sexual abuse itself. Dreadful as that may be, it is a problem which society can deal with simply by strengthening current procedures and following up any suspicions with tough interview and monitoring procedures. The real problem facing us now is a philosophical divide. We are giving arbitrary powers over our children to social workers and doctors who may well have a philosophical stake in the discovery of child abuse. Furthermore, we are contemplating massive training programmes which, unless we are very careful indeed, will continue this dangerous approach. I have written about this before but I think the point bears repeating: it was Wynne who bluntly stated the problem in a letter she wrote last year to a journal in response to police surgeon Dr Raine Robert's criticism of RAD tests. "In the current controversy," wrote Wynne, "it is interesting to find some paediatricians in alliance with the powerless and the abused - that is the child -

and some police surgeons in alliance with more traditional authorities in the form of the parents and the police." Then, citing an analysis of the Cleveland affair by a communist writer, Wynne makes her stand: "It is as much these differences in philosophy that prevent us moving closer to Dr Robert's view than merely the interpretation of the scientific material which is already available." This is the language of those who see child abuse not simply as a monstrous criminal act but as an element in class warfare - which may mean the dispossession against the bourgeoisie or the professionals against the family. This automatically opens up definitions of what constitutes child abuse and explains the more cavalier approach to evidence and diagnosis. Of course a great number of people worried about child abuse are not using the issue for some other political agenda. But good intentions can easily be hijacked. We are creating "powerful" procedures to challenge the autonomy of the family. If we are to begin training programmes to fight child abuse we had better make sure that these programmes are not in the hands of people who are committed to discovering abuse where it does not exist. And that our £7 million will not go to those who are intent on simply marshalling our resources to further their "differences in philosophy".

Service with a familiar smile

Why, later this month, some well-known faces will willingly abandon all attempts at anonymous shopping

If shop assistants and waiters dream of being stars, then the reverse, it seems, is also true: stars dream of being shop assistants and waiters. Nearly 200 of them have volunteered for such real-life roles in a charity event at Covent Garden at the end of this month on Saturday, July 30. The idea is simple: the celebrities draw the crowds, the crowds spend their money and each participating store, bar or restaurant donates 5 per

cent of the day's takings. The money will go to two Aids charities, the Terrence Higgins Trust and Frontliners, a self-help group for victims. Shop Assistance is the brainchild of Kelly Hunter, a 24-year-old former National Theatre actress who lost a close friend to the disease. "I'd helped with benefits for the Trust which were marvellous but I began to feel that we were preaching to the converted, that we had to reach people who can't afford £50 tickets." She knew Covent Garden

from her appearances at the Donmar Warehouse and thought its unique community atmosphere ideal for an appeal. But her initial approaches to shops for donations met with a resounding silence. It was only when she hit on the idea of asking the famous to take part that the idea really took off. Hunter and co-organizers Michael Reed, an American actor, and Sonia Friedman, a stage manager, began with personal contacts. "It's amazing how many people you know in the theatre, when you try," Friedman says. "It really was a case of ringing up and saying, 'Do you remember me? I'm the girl with the curly hair you worked with three years ago at so and so'."

For nearly six months they have cajoled and charmed their way past agents and managers who often said no, to the VIPs themselves who usually said yes. They've been aided by youth and beauty and the kind of resilience you get when, as in Hunter's case, you've played the title role in the NT's notorious flop Jean Seberg. They wear a badge. "Those Shop Assistance people are the pushiest I've ever met" - taken from an overheard remark. Only one man, Hunter says,

did not want anything to do with an Aids charity. They have tried to match the celebrity to the shop: bespectacled Su Pollard is in an optician's; Gordon Kaye, the café owner of 'Allo 'Allo, in a wine bar; Cynthia Payne in a café (which takes luncheon vouchers); Delia Smith with the pots and pans in one kitchen shop; Uri Geller with the cutlery in another. Claire Rayner, at her request, is in a confectionery and The Times's financial editor, David Brewerton, will be in jewellers Thomas Kettle, at their

request. During our interview in their offices off Hatton Garden, donated by an anonymous benefactor, the phone rang to say Frank Bruno had agreed to help. There was much excitement over where to put him. "The Body Shop, of course," someone says. When they embarked on the project the target was £100,000. Now, with an overwhelming number of traders involved - "only eight baddies have held out" - they hope it may be more. No one

has ever calculated how much money the area takes, but an average summer Saturday will draw a million visitors and Shop Assistance hopes to attract another half-million. The scheme now involves London Transport, which has agreed to close Covent Garden underground station and open the Aldwych, which is normally closed at weekends. The event is also aimed at educating the 17 to 35-year-old age group. Aids information leaflets will be popped

into purchase bags and the charities plan to have their own stalls there. Hunter knows Aids victims who have died without ever being able to admit what was wrong. Shop Assistance has bossed her life for half a year now. At one point when the trio were flagging, two people they knew died of the disease on the same day. "It was like a bolt of lightning hitting us," Hunter says. "We knew then there was no going back."

Liz Gill



Covent Garden assistants: (from left) Michael Reed, Sonia Friedman and Kelly Hunter, the organizers of the day of shopping with stars

habitat Sale

NOW ON

1/2 price

Selected fabrics and wallpapers

10% off

Sofas à la Carte

1/3 off

Selected Furniture Ranges

and many more offers in store

Turn of wagon wheels

From Mrs M.A. Alafouzo, Victoria Drive, Wimbledon, London SW19

Through I have often taken exception to Barbara Amiel's views, I must congratulate her on her stand ("Of bands, handwagons and fellow travellers", Friday Page, June 17). Despite the vagaries and

TALKBACK

necessities of war alliances, it seems to me that Communists and Fascists (or Nazis) have very much in common and both stand at either extreme to our own democratic ideals and values. However, at least since

the Spanish Civil War, a rather widespread Marxist notion would have us believe that the world is neatly divided into Communists and Fascists, and that whoever is not on the Communist bandwagon must of necessity be a Fascist or fellow traveller, which, in this case, means pro-apartheid. Ms Amiel's article goes a long way towards dispelling the propagation of this myth.

From Rafael Weber, Lancaster Grove, London NW3

In respect of Barbara Amiel's article, I must say that although I too am annoyed by the affected "political awareness" of pop singers today, I equally abhor the apathetic attitude adopted by people of Ms Amiel's political convictions. Her sort always plead that "there is an understanding in South Africa that apartheid... cannot continue", and then sit back content, believing that they are relieved from taking action of any kind. It is in fact Ms Amiel's remarks that are merely "cheap sophistry".

From Malcolm Wicks, Director, Family Policy Studies Centre, 231 Baker Street, London NW1

Barbara Amiel ("Getting the parents that society deserves", June 24) notes that "A study from the Family Policy Studies Centre recommended that divorce be forbidden to couples married for less than three years". She refers to this recommendation as verging on the "eccentric". I wish to make it clear that our centre did not make such a recommendation. The Family Policy Studies Centre is an independent body. We have no political, religious or other association. We are not in the business of policy prescription, "eccentric" or otherwise.

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INFORMATION SERVICE

This selective guide to entertainment and events throughout Britain appears from Monday to Friday, followed in the Saturday section by a preview of the week ahead.

BOOKING KEY
* Seats available
+ Returns only
(D) Access for disabled

THEATRE LONDON

DOWNFALL: A close look at contemporary urban terror by Gregory Motton.
Theatre Upstairs, Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, SW1 (01-730 2554).

LETITIA AND LOVAGE: Maggie Smith and Margaret Tzack weaving eccentric war against the modern world.
Globe Theatre, London E1 7.30pm, Sat 8.30-10.45pm, mats Sat 5-7.15pm, 25.50-£13.50.

FILMS

Also on national release
Advance booking possible
CROCODILE DUNDEE II (PG): Disappointingly flat sequel to the runaway Aussie hit.

Canon Baywater (01-229 4149). Progs 3.00, 5.45, 8.30.
Canon Chelsea (01-352 5096). Progs 1.35, 3.35, 5.35, 7.35, 8.40.



DAVID REDFERN

Hits to hot gospel

What a pleasure once again to hear the lambent voice of Al Green (left) singing 'Let's Stay Together' at the recent Mandela Aid concert.

curtain ring salesman (John Candy) on a nightmare journey from New York to Chicago (100 min).
Progs 2.00, 4.30, 7.00, 9.15.

GARDENS

DORSET: Lankham House, Cattistock, nr Lisle, SW of Petersfield, from A27 turn 10m NW of Dorchester.

GALLERIES

ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS: The annual exhibition of members' efforts.

SUMMER SALES

RED ON DEAD: 61 Neal Street, London WC2 (01-579 7571), 22 Rupert Street W1 (01-439 2408).

TALKS

MARKS OF GENIUS: Gallery lecture by James Heard about the signatures and monograms in the National Gallery.

WALKS

ON THE TRAIL OF JACK THE RIPPER: meet Whitechapel tube, 7.30pm, £3 (also next Fri).

ROCK

STAN TRACEY/ANDY SHEPARD: Fronting a coupling of the Elington-trusted pianist and the young saxophonist who is the most adept of the current crop of young players.

BOOKINGS

NATIONAL THEATRE: Counter booking opens today for Aug/Sep, with performances of The Winter's Tale.

FIRST CHANCE

LIVERPOOL FESTIVAL OF COMEDY: See caption.

LAST CHANCE

ELEKTRA: Last performance this season by Royal Opera of Strauss work with Gwyneth Jones, and Elizabeth Svalby.

OPERA

★ FALSTAFF: Verdi's opera as it should be seen, superbly conducted by Bernard Haitink.

CONCERTS

★ NEW LONDON MOCTURE: New London Orchestras under Ronald Corp play Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante K 497.

CONCISE CROSSWORD NO 1610
ACROSS
1 Face framing headgear (6)
2 Excitedly busy (5)
3 Gladly (7)

ENTERTAINMENTS
CONCERTS
CORREY CHORAL, St Paul's Cathedral, Commercial St, E.C1, POPPILLION, City of London Festival, July 10-12.

OPERA & BALLET
GARRIQUO THEATRE, July 12-13, 1988.
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, July 10-12, 1988.

ART GALLERIES
BARNES ART GALLERY, Barnes, Surrey, Tel: 01-871 9211.
BARNES ART GALLERY, Barnes, Surrey, Tel: 01-871 9211.

BEST PLAY Standard Drama Awards 1987 A SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS
"ALAN AYCKBOURN'S brilliant new play"
NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252

ENTERTAINMENTS
CONCERTS
CORREY CHORAL, St Paul's Cathedral, Commercial St, E.C1, POPPILLION, City of London Festival, July 10-12.

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TELEVISION AND RADIO

Compiled by Peter Dear and Jane Rackham

BBC1

- 6.00 Cerebra AM. 6.40 Lovers Erol in Pony Pony. 7.00 Breakfast News with Jeremy Paxman and Sally Jones...

ITV/LONDON

- 6.00 TV-am begins with The Morning Programme. 6.15 Doctor in the House. 6.45 News with Fiona Armstrong...

BBC2

- 6.55 Open University: Science - A School of Games. 9.00 Cerebra 1.20 Bertha. 2.00 News followed by International Golf...

CHANNEL 4

- 11.30 Women in View. Current affairs series for women. 12.00 Nature in Focus. Helen and Chris explore the bugs and straws of a bogia...

America's leading man



From small-town to the big time: Ronald Reagan with his first wife, actress Jane Wyman, and daughter Maureen (C4, 8.15pm)

TELEVISION CHOICE

When Ronald Reagan was asked to take part in Barry Norman's Hollywood Greats programme on John Wyman, he did so on condition that he spoke direct to camera and delivered a prepared text...

are presented once again with the small-town boy from middle America who learned traditional values of individuality and independence at his mother's knee...

Peter Waymark

Cooke's tour of heroes



Anecdotes but no adjectives: Alistair Cooke (R4, 4.05pm)

RADIO CHOICE

My Heroes (Radio 4, 4.05pm), the unpretentious series that has encouraged well-known people to wallow harmlessly in idolatry, ends today with a double whammy...

next door to Beethoven. But it's when he gets around to Mencken this afternoon that Cooke really warms up, and the anecdotes flow like liquid gold...

Peter Davalle

- BBC1 WALES: 5.30pm-6.00 Wales Today. 6.00-6.30 News followed by Neighbours. 6.30-7.00 News followed by Scotland...

- 3.00 Film: Appointment in Honduras. 3.30-4.00 Young Doctors. 4.00-4.30 News. 4.30-5.00 The Bank Readers...

Radio 3 and Radio 4 program listings. Radio 3: 6.55 Weather, News Headlines, 7.00 Morning Concert. Radio 4: 6.00 News, 6.10 Farming Today, 6.25 Prayer for the Day...

Large advertisement for Lunn Poly. Text: 'SEE YOURSELF WITHOUT GOING INTO THE RED'. Lunn Poly are offering £60 off per person on selected InTourist Russian tours from Manchester and Gatwick...

Platform hit by blast four years ago

By David Young and Ronald Fax... The Piper Alpha platform pumped its first oil ashore in December 1976 and has since been one of the North Sea's best performing oil fields...

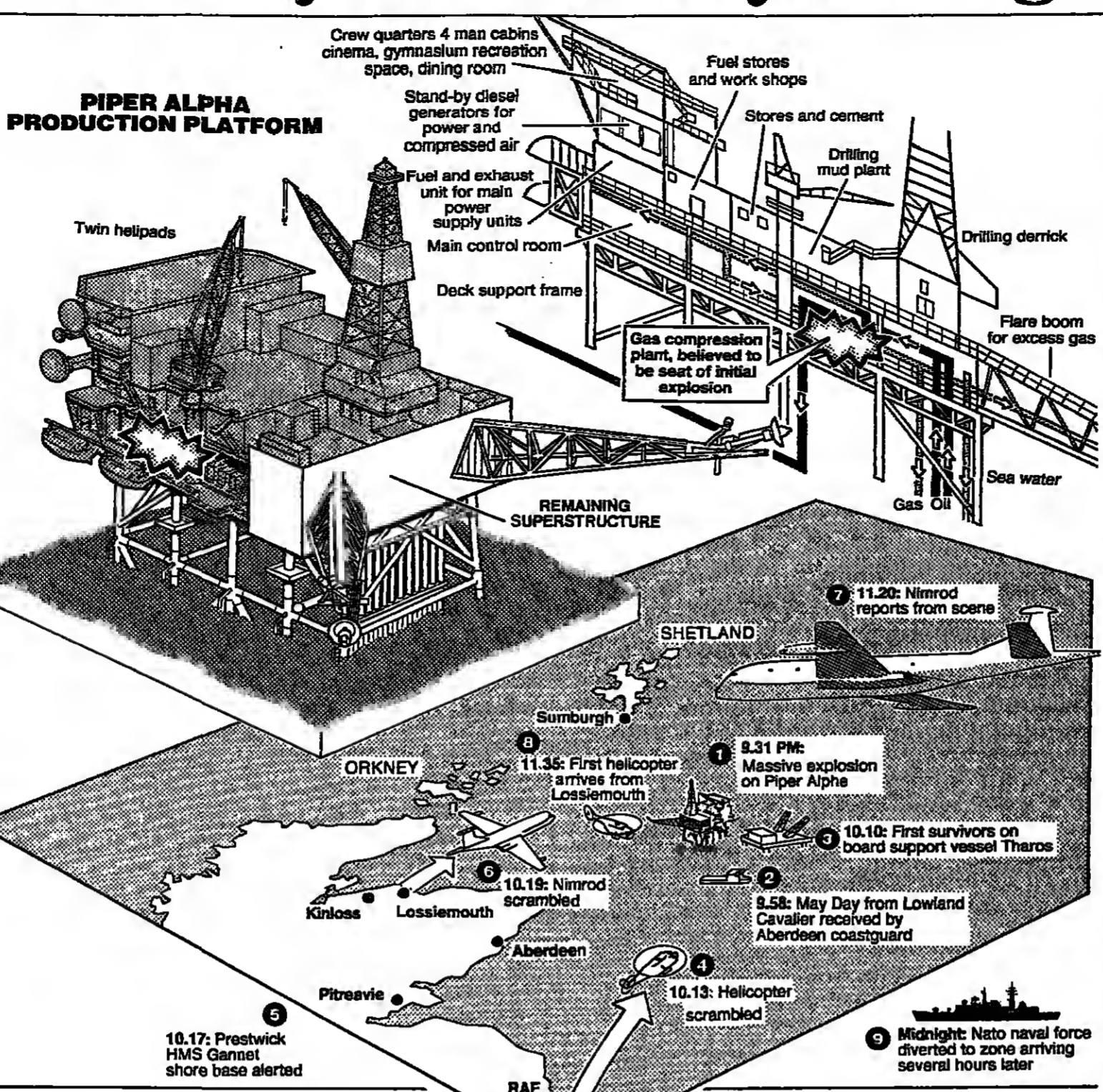
Oil runs through a 28-inch pipeline 128 miles to the Flotta Terminal on the Orkney Islands... Gas is piped 34 miles north through an 18-inch pipeline...

The advanced down-hole system installed in North Sea wells will ensure that the 36 wells feeding into the Piper Alpha platform will have automatically sealed themselves off...

The main jacket, the steel legs supporting the accommodation and production modules, was built in two sections, one at the UJE yard at Le Havre and the other at the McDermott Scotland yard near Inverness...

The Piper Platform's four massive legs are buried 150 feet into the sea bed. It rises almost 500 feet from the mud level to the main platform, with the drilling derrick rising 150 feet above that...

Current work on the platform resulted in an extra 32 being on board on Wednesday evening...



Theory of gas build-up Survivors jumped 70ft into darkness

Continued from page 1... ropes slung from the platform. Virtually all those who survived were working on deck at the time...

try. There was no time to ask - it was over the side or nothing I just dived - it may have been 60 feet...

Survivors yesterday spoke of a squealing sound of escaping gas about 30 seconds before the first explosion on the 12-year-old rig...

Continued from page 1... rescue had seemed like a lifetime. He and the few other people he was with had not panicked...

They lost. I saw the inflatable picking up people when a massive explosion occurred above their heads and killed the lot...

Commons sketch

Enough sensitivity to span the globe

The twinkling of a butterfly at sunset... the gentle splash of water against the Bridge of Sighs by moonlight...

The House then extended its sensitivity to every corner of the globe. Sir Richard Body wanted the Prime Minister to feel moved by a recent report...

The Prime Minister stated that "we are all equal before the law", before turning to hear a less guilt-mongering question from Mrs Gillian Shephard...

Brazier, whose visible loopy-ness has been brought to the attention of readers many times before, beamed and yelped with delight, as if the dualling of the A11 might well be the answer to all the world's wrongs...

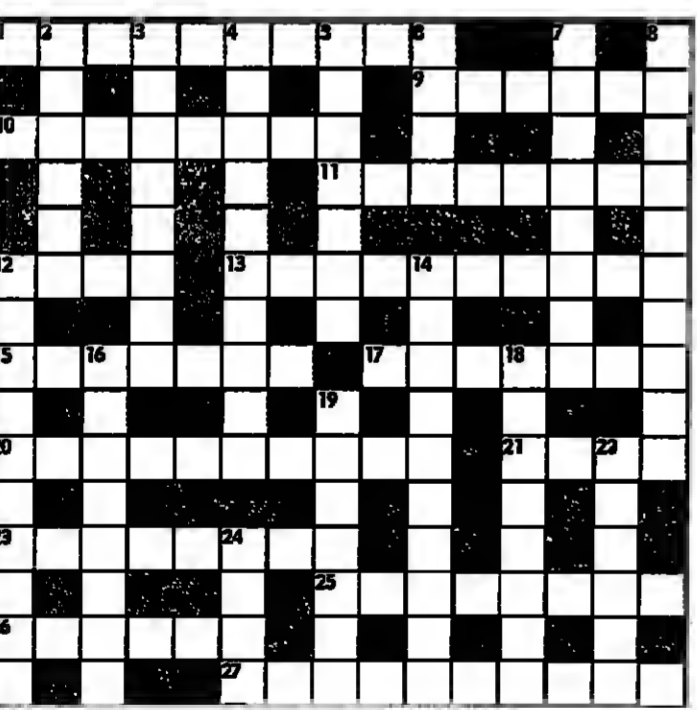
But whatever happened to the underlying theme of sensitivity, running like a fine golden thread between the folds of this diligent if witty commentary? Why, it was lying ready to be spun back to life by the dapper yet highly sensitive form of Mr Paul Boateng...

Air victims mourned

Continued from page 1... nounce America, the West and Iraq. Judging by the number of buses and the banners from the Ministry of Defence and Iran Air, many were part of an orchestrated demonstration...

hinted that Iran would avenge their deaths through the media and the UN, due to sit in emergency debate on Tuesday, rather than by the gun...

THE TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO 17,716



- ACROSS 1 School equipment provided by unlighted council (10). 9 State capital for Victoria, say (6). 10 Vehicle I head after in traffic (8). 11 Produce tip with hesitation, having inside info (8).

WORD-WATCHING

- a. Ravenously hungry b. Carrying keys c. Music from street strings

Answers to puzzle No 17,715. A 10-letter word starting with S and ending with R. A 10-letter word starting with M and ending with N.

WEATHER

It will be a day of sunshine and showers, with the brightest weather likely to be in the south and east. Further north, over north-west England, Northern Ireland and western Scotland, skies will be mainly cloudy...

Table with columns for ABOARD and AROUND BRITAIN, listing weather forecasts for various locations like London, Manchester, and Glasgow.

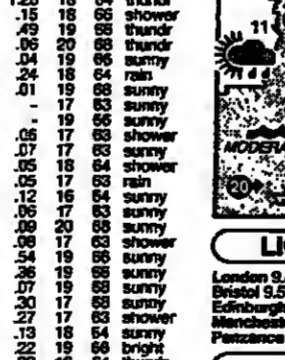
THE POUND

Table listing exchange rates for various countries and currencies against the British Pound.

TOWER BRIDGE

Tower Bridge will be lit at the following times today: 9.00am, 11.15am, 4.50pm and 6.15pm.

NOON TODAY



POLLEN COUNT

The pollen count for London and the South-east is high for the month...

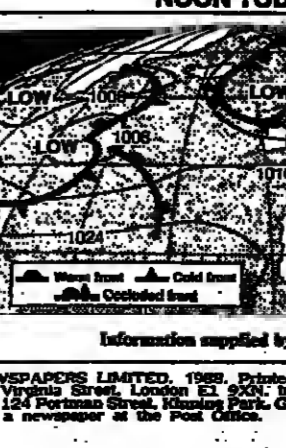
HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temp: Leuchars, Fife, 92F (34C). Lowest day temp: Capta Wharf, Hampshire, 12C (54F).

TOWER BRIDGE

Tower Bridge will be lit at the following times today: 9.00am, 11.15am, 4.50pm and 6.15pm.

NOON TODAY



AM PM



LONDON

Yesterday: Temp: max 6am to 9pm, 19C (66F); min 9.57pm to 4.35am, 13C (55F).

MANCHESTER

Yesterday: Temp: max 6am to 9pm, 17C (63F); min 5pm to 10pm, 10C (50F).

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Wednesday's highest day temp: Leuchars, Fife, 92F (34C). Lowest day temp: Capta Wharf, Hampshire, 12C (54F).

TOWER BRIDGE

Tower Bridge will be lit at the following times today: 9.00am, 11.15am, 4.50pm and 6.15pm.

NOON TODAY



BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Shares halted by talks at Lowe and Babygro

Dealings in shares in both Robert H Lowe, the Cheshire clothing manufacturer, and Babygro Holdings, the Scottish childrenswear group...

Micro Focus in joint deal

Micro Focus, the computer software group which returned to profitability last year after two years of losses...

Bid for Stead is extended

Playford Properties, the property developer, has extended its hostile £108.1 million bid for Stead & Simpson...

Hampson in cash call

Hampson Industries, the West Midlands engineering group, is raising £4.94 million via a one-for-eight rights issue of convertible preference shares...

EEC jobless falls by 1.6%

The number of jobless in the European Community fell by 400,000 in May, but the seasonally adjusted rate was unchanged at 10.3 per cent.

Belgian buy for Wilkes

James Wilkes, the engineering group which took on new management this year, is paying £5 million for Waterlomat, a Belgian beer maker...

Waterglade Int issue

The shopping centre developer, Waterglade International, is looking for £12.5 million from shareholders via a convertible preference rights issue...

£80m facility for Goal

Goal Petroleum has arranged banking facilities of \$137 million (£80 million) to pay for its development of the Wytch Farm oil field in Dorset...

Krupp may change status

Fried. Krupp, the West German steel and engineering group, is considering a public listing...

Monks & Crane steady

Reorganization costs at Monks & Crane, the USM-quoted distributor of industrial products, once part of Thorn EMI, saw pre-tax profits barely changed at £2.0 million in the year to end-March...

Virgin Group may retreat to privacy

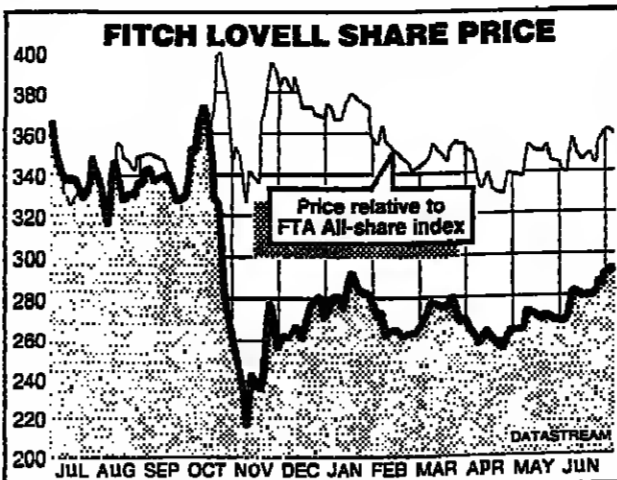
Honour runs high at Virgin. Mr Richard Branson's tears over losing his mates' money are real enough. But are they justified and could they have been spared?

Let one thing be clear. Mr Branson's decision to return his baby to its womb has no sinister undertones. The group has not run into serious trading problems...

But there are fund managers these days who scramble for the exits at any company that fails to show more than 20 per cent earnings growth.

Hughes Food

Hughes Food is not a widely followed stock in the food manufacturing sector, but neither was Hilldown Holdings a few years ago.



FITCH LOVELL SHARE PRICE

Balance coming from a machinery business. Organic profits growth last year was 60 per cent, with acquisitions contributing about £2 million at the pre-tax level.

Fresh and chilled food are the markets in which Hughes see the greatest growth potential so the group is concentrating on starting up new businesses in this field as well as making acquisitions.

Christie coming to market at £33.7m

Christie Group, Britain's biggest business valuation agency which specializes in putting a price on other people's businesses, has itself been valued at £33.7 million...

company has seen no signs of a share stake being accumulated. Nevertheless this must be a possibility longer term, particularly if acquisitions dilute the directors' holding further.

Fitch Lovell

Fitch Lovell put in a creditable performance last year. Pre-tax profits were up 20 per cent to £27.8 million, comfortably ahead of analysts' expectations.

On the food manufacturing side, where profits grew 13 per cent to £18.1 million, the group tries to keep up with the fads and fashions of changing public taste.

Call for EEC vetting on cross-border mergers

By Derek Harris Industrial Editor

Narrow, nationalistic competition policies should be set aside in favour of the European Commission becoming the key arbiter for international company mergers.



John Banham: policy barrier

He proposed that once the Commission had decided to examine a merger, national authorities would have to stand aside even if the Commission decided against taking any action.

European regulation should be based on several general principles, said Mr Banham. It should promote the competitiveness of European business in world markets...

The legal and economic criteria on which controls were based should be clearly defined and the system ought

Brussels defends approval of BSC 'beneficial' aid

By Colin Narbrough

The European Commission yesterday defended its past approval of massive subsidies to British Steel Corporation.

Brussels argues that BSC carried out in full the restructuring plan to which the aid was linked, and has fulfilled its promise of returning to profitability.

The West German Iron and Steel Association has issued a writ against the Commission for failing to act against some £930 million of aid which, in the Germans' view, has distorted competition...

Mr Gwyn bought Christie in 1980 from the Reliance Service group. Until now he had 78 per cent of the company. He will collect just under £3 million as his shareholding is whittled down to 60 per cent.

Christie Group - no relation to the fine art dealer of similar name - has had phenomenal success over the last four years, raising turnover by a compound 45 per cent a year to £17.2 million.

During the past year Christie handled business deals and valuations worth more than £2 billion, negotiated finance deals totalling more than £100 million, conducted 19,000 stocktakes and produced appraisals of businesses worth more than £1.5 billion for banks and other institutions.

Earnings per share last year were 10.8p, indicating an historic price/earnings ratio of 13.4 at the placing price.

Germany to update bourses

(Reuter) - The Federation of West German Stock Exchanges is embarking on a modernization programme to help its members catch up with other financial centres.

The programme starts with a real-time share index this month, and the Federation is planning at least six big changes in the next two years.

Other improvements include a contract on index futures for a planned futures market, continuous trading for some federal government bonds, introduction of stop-loss orders for investors and

amalgamation of the bourses' two computer systems. "We want to strengthen the international position of West Germany's bourses," Herr Gernot Ernst, chairman of the Federation, said.

A recent announcement by the London International Financial Futures Exchange, that it had started trading in a futures contract on a 10-year federal government bond, caused consternation in West Germany.

UK electronics firms 'lagging behind'

By Our City Staff

British electronics companies appear to be ill-placed to benefit from the single European market after 1992.

This is one of the conclusions reached by McKinsey, the management consultant. Key aspects of its report are contained in a paper on the industry drawn up by the

National Economic Development Council. McKinsey says Britain's leading indigenous electronics companies must undertake a comprehensive programme of action if they are to survive in their increasingly competitive and globalizing sector.

Although the national electronics firms have performed adequately over the past 10 years, they have lagged behind their foreign rivals in revenue and employment growth, and in aggregate lost substantial market share.

that British electronics production in 1986 was worth £18.2 billion and employed 330,000 people. While demand in the past decade has grown at more than 9 per cent each year, production averaged only about 8.4 per cent, producing a widening trade gap in electronic goods, now about £2 billion.

McKinsey notes that the sectors in which British-owned companies are strongest - defence, telecommunications and aerospace - will grow more slowly than the industry as a whole to 1991,

and are likely to become more competitive. Important growth areas are expected to be software, instruments, computers, automation and components.

It foresees increasing globalization, forcing companies with "safe" niches, such as in applications software, to pursue more aggressive growth strategies, while the traditional competitive edge of British firms in higher-value-added electronics will be challenged by the Far East.

McKinsey urges British electronics companies to focus on core businesses and develop the "critical mass" needed to become viable competitors. It also suggests that companies should develop structures and leadership style that support long-term growth, foster cross-business synergies, more commercial culture and strategic vision.

Other suggestions include: communicate long-term strategies to the financial market to correct perceived short-termism; and work with suppliers to improve the components supply infrastructure.

WATERGLADE INTERNATIONAL HOLDINGS plc RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 1988 Financial Highlights: Turnover increased to over £17M, Profit before tax up 46% to £4.6M, Dividend per share of 4p.

UK electronics firms 'lagging behind' By Our City Staff. National Economic Development Council. McKinsey says Britain's leading indigenous electronics companies must undertake a comprehensive programme of action...

COMPANY BRIEFS BURTONWOOD BREWERY (fin) Pre-tax: £2.93 (£2.66m) EPS: 9.3 (8.3)p Div: 2.535 (2.3)p LOGITEK (fin) Pre-tax: £2.06 (£1.19m) EPS: 11.49 (7.72)p Div: 1.8 (1.3)p RUSSELL (ALEX) (fin) Pre-tax: £2.87 (£1.53m) EPS: 6.55 (4.5)p Div: 1.4 mkg 1.34p

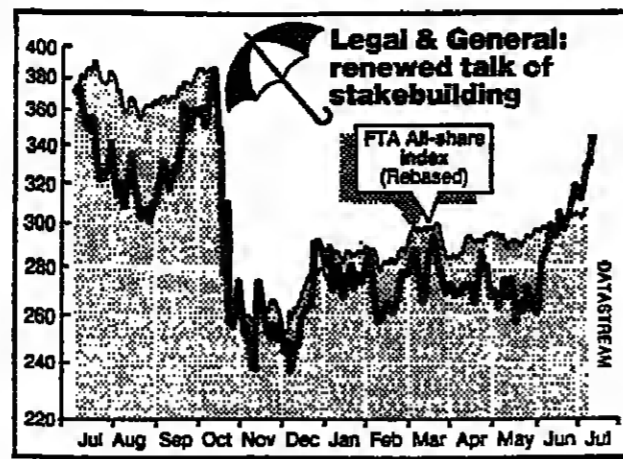
The contents of this statement have been approved for the purposes of Section 57 of the Financial Services Act 1986 by Touche Ross & Co who are authorized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Past performance is not necessarily an indicator of future performance.

STOCK MARKETS

Myson up on revived bid talk

Shares of Myson, the heating engineer, moved against the trend closing 5p better at a new high of 226p on revived talk of a bid from BICC...

The FT-SE 100 share index closed 14.5 down at 1,855.5 while the narrower FT 30 share index lost 10.4 to finish at 1,484.2.



share price in recent weeks does indicate that someone else might have taken a shine to them.

There was some big turnover in shares of Legal & General, the insurer, as about 8 million shares changed hands and the price rose 8p to 337 1/2p.

Jaguar, the luxury car manufacturer, rallied 1 1/2p to 303 1/2p, shunning off recent weakness. Back in May the shares were trading at about 250p following a series of profit downgrades...

paid £50 million for a 3 per cent stake stake, rose by 8p to 343 1/2p as Cazenove, the broker, emerged as a big buyer.

Abbey Life, the insurance group, hardened 1p to 322p. It has replaced Cadbury Schweppes as a constituent of the top 100 shares that make up the FT-SE list.

Oil and Gas, Sovereign Oil and Gas, slipped 5p to 145p, Goal Petroleum 1.5p to 114.5p and Pict Petroleum 4p to 103p.

Fisons shrugged off an early fall to close all-square at 264p on talk of an upgrading of profits by James Capel, the broker.

Michael Clark and Geoffrey Foster continued their upward momentum and climbed to another post-crash high in the afternoon.

TOKYO

Nikkei falls 38 points

(Reuters) - Share prices closed lower due to profit-taking after recent strengths, as investors left large capital issues and turned to other areas.

The Nikkei index lost 38.47 points, or 0.14 per cent, to 27,728.13. It climbed 189.43 points on Wednesday. Volume was a 2 billion shares against 2.8 billion.

"A lot of investors are uncertain of the direction of markets in general," Mr Rupert Middle, manager of Kleinwort Benson International, said.

HONG KONG

Shares keep momentum

(Reuters) - Share prices continued their upward momentum and climbed to another post-crash high in the afternoon.

The Hang Seng index rose 22.12 points to 2,759.33. Turnover rose to HK\$1.65 billion (£98 million) from HK\$1.18 billion on Wednesday.

FRANKFURT

Commerzbank index down

(Reuters) - Share prices closed lower on a moderate bounce but off the worst levels, as underlying favourable sentiment helped to offset earlier profit-taking...

NEW YORK

Blue chips recover after early falls

(Reuters) - Wall Street shares fell in early trading yesterday after the closing of six North Sea oil fields when a rig exploded, but blue chips soon began to recover.

The Dow Jones industrial average was down 3.92 to 2,126.24 at one stage, after falling to 2,120. The transport average lost 2.99 to 889.93 and the utilities index slipped 1.01 to 179.59.

Declining shares led advancing issues by a two-to-one ratio in moderate trading.

WALL STREET

Table with columns for various stock indices and prices, including Dow Jones, S&P 500, and various sector indices.

Table titled 'CANADIAN PRICES' listing various Canadian stock prices.

Gibbs Mew pulls out of Coopers stake buy

Gibbs Mew, the Salisbury, Wiltshire, brewer, has pulled out of the proposed acquisition of a 50 per cent stake in Coopers of Wessex, a drinks wholesaler owned by Allied-lyons...

Norish seeks to raise £2.3m by share offer

Norish, the Irish frozen food distribution group, has won a London quote for its Dublin-listed shares, and seeks to raise £2.3 million for acquisitions through an open share offer.

EEC hits at Japan for separate deals with US

Tokyo (Reuters) - European Community officials criticized Japan for making two-way deals with the US and urged it to keep expanding imports from the EEC.

Successful candidates in the Trinity Bar examination

- List of names of successful candidates in the Trinity Bar examination, including COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION PASS LIST and SCHOLARSHIPS AND PRIZES.

BAR EXAMINATIONS

Advertisement for Bar Examinations by Chart University Tutors, including details on courses and contact information.

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Advertisement for Michaelmas 1988 Exams, Trinity 1989 Exams, and Correspondence Courses.

Congratulations on your examination success from Barclays Bank PLC

Advertisement from Barclays Bank PLC congratulating students on their examination success.

Hay Davison becomes a Storehouse director

By Martin Waller

Storehouse, the troubled retail conglomerate, is beefing up its board with three new non-executive directors, including Mr Ian Hay Davison, the former Lloyd's deputy chairman and chief executive, and chairman-designate of CL Alexanders Laing & Cruickshank, the broker.

The other two are Mr Christopher Bland, who is chairman of LWT (Holdings), and Dr Margaret Downes, a director of the Bank of Ireland and a member of its Court.

Mr Hay Davison was appointed to the top position at the broker this year but is best known as the architect of reforms at Lloyd's, which he left in 1986. He later effected a similar clean-up operation in Hong Kong.

Sir Terence Conran's retail empire, which takes in Habitat, Mothercare and BHS, was threatened with two break-up bids last year.

Market speculation started up last month suggesting that one of the companies interested then, Mr Tony Clegg's Mountleigh property group, would return with a full bid when allowed to do so in August. The talk has continued since.

Sir Terence promised the City he would add to his non-executive directors in September, on the abrupt departure of



New post: Ian Hay Davison, former Lloyd's chief executive

Mr Denis Cassidy, the BHS deputy chairman and chief executive, and Mr Colin Williams, its assistant managing director, who were also on the main board.

They left after Sir Terence's announcement that he would

Molins hopes for royalties bonanza in US patent suit

From Bailey Morris, Washington

Molins, the British equipment manufacturer, is a good example of the contention that British companies and academics are very good at discovering new processes but not at commercializing them.

The situation may change dramatically, however, if Molins wins its patent infringement suit in a Delaware court, which could result in millions of dollars worth of royalties from more than 200 US machine tool companies.

The patent was filed in the US in 1965 when the concept of computer-controlled clusters of machines performing

manufacturing tasks was just an idea in the mind of Mr HA Williamson, the former director of research at Molins.

His work appeared so promising that Molins was persuaded to file patents in several industrialized countries in the 1960s but its early efforts to develop the process, notably for an IBM plant in Minnesota, failed because the computers were not sophisticated enough.

According to the *New York Times*, the matter would have ended there if Molins had dropped its patent claims in the US as it had done in other

industrialized countries. The reason it did not was because the US is the only industrialized nation which does not require payments to keep the patent alive.

In addition, Molins had the good fortune to retain a tenacious Maryland attorney, Mr John Smith, who offered to pursue the claim from 1979 onward without fees, in return for a one-half interest in the spoils.

Since then, the use of computer-driven machine clusters to perform various functions, making everything from cars to household appliances, has

become commonplace. Molins claimed in its suit that its patent could be read to cover all computer-controlled machines which work with materials handling and storage equipment in a process which gives flexibility in the order in which they perform processing tasks. If the patent is upheld, the US machine tool industry may end up paying billions of dollars to Molins.

Some large US companies, tired of waiting for the litigation to end, have negotiated lucrative licences with Molins. They include General Motors.

Record year for First Security

By Geoffrey Foster

ares of First Security, the car electronics to security detection products group, advanced 8p to 345p on news that the company had made record pre-tax profits of £2.53 million for the year to April 30, up 23 per cent on last time. Turnover rose 17 per cent to £14.9 million.

The final dividend is 3.3p, making a total of 5p compared with last year's 4.2p.

The company's strategy of seeking growth through market leadership in niche markets continues.

It enters the new financial year with a strong balance sheet and insignificant borrowings. The order book is full across its established car security and fire businesses, with contributions from Humanetics and Fdes, the recent US acquisitions, coming through.

The car security division is performing well. More than 4 million units of its popular crash sensors were sold, with Ford recently signing a new four-year sole supply contract. During the year, Mazda of

Japan and Kia of Korea were added to the list of crash sensor users.

The fire division had a good second half, finishing with record order books. Fire detection systems and extinguisher sales proved much better than expected, while Vesda, the very early warning fire detection system, and Fireway, the long-range infra-red detection system, both beat sales targets.

Several new products were introduced in the security division, which has yet to

make an impact in a competitive market.

This area of the business was also affected by sterling and dollar exchange considerations, with sales through Inertiaguard, the group's Californian joint venture, falling short of budget.

The group continues to build on its presence in the US market, and since the year-end has formed a new subsidiary under the operating name of Advanced Vehicle Concepts, which will deal with car security design.

Bryant dip leads to takeover

By Our City Staff

Derek Bryant, Group, the USM-quoted Lloyd's insurance broker, has agreed a reverse takeover from an unquoted company, NCV Group Holdings, after pre-tax losses in the year to end-December of £687,000 and deteriorating trading since. The previous year Bryant made pre-tax profits of £110,000.

It is acquiring NCV, the holding company for an insurance broking group, for 10.22 million new shares, and making a one-for-two rights issue at 50p. The vendors of NCV are taking up their rights to 5.08 million shares and will have an 86.5 per cent holding in the enlarged group.

Its name will be changed to DG Durham Group, an NCV subsidiary.

No dividend is being paid for the year - a 2p final payment was made the previous year.

Dealings in Bryant shares were suspended at 10.5p yesterday. Trading will recommence on August 4, if the proposals are approved at a July 29 meeting.

Mr Richard Read, a director of NCV who will chair the enlarged company, said the new company would aim for a stock market quotation to be used to acquire other companies.

NCV made pre-tax profits of £535,000 on turnover of £5.35 million.

ALPHA STOCKS

Table of Alpha Stocks with columns for Vol 1000 and stock names like ADT, Abbey, AM-Lyons, etc.

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS

Table of Traditional Options with columns for First Dealings, Last Dealings, Last Declaration, and For Settlement.

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS

Large table of London Traded Options with multiple columns for various stock options and their prices.

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BY AIR, BY LAND, AS THE CROW FLIES. BY HAND.



THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Main table containing unit trust information, including columns for fund names, managers, and performance metrics.

UNLISTED SECURITIES

Table of unlisted securities with columns for company names, prices, and other financial data.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

Table of foreign exchange rates for various currencies, including Sterling, Dollar, and Euro.

MONEY MARKETS

Table of money market rates, including Euro money deposits and gold prices.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

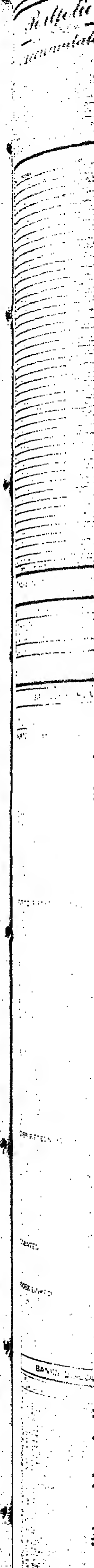
Table of investment trusts with columns for trust names, managers, and performance metrics.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

Table of London financial futures prices for various commodities and currencies.

COMMODITIES

Table of commodity prices, including oil, metals, and agricultural products.



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Table listing 44 companies across various sectors like Aerospace, Building Roads, Textiles, etc., with columns for High, Low, Company, Group, and Gains or Loss.

Weekly Dividend table with columns for MON, TUE, WED, THU, FRI, SAT, and Weekly Total.

BRITISH FUNDS table with columns for High, Low, Stock, Price, Change, and %.

SHORTS (Under Five Years) table with columns for High, Low, Stock, Price, Change, and %.

FIVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS table with columns for High, Low, Stock, Price, Change, and %.

OVER FIFTEEN YEARS table with columns for High, Low, Stock, Price, Change, and %.

UNDATED table with columns for High, Low, Stock, Price, Change, and %.

INDEX-LINKED table with columns for High, Low, Stock, Price, Change, and %.

BANKS, DISCOUNT HP table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

ELECTRICALS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES Small losses

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began July 4. Dealings end July 15. Contango day July 18. Settlement day July 25.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

BREWERIES table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

BUILDING, ROADS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

FINANCE, LAND table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

FINANCIAL TRUSTS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

CHEMICALS, PLASTICS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

CINEMAS, TV table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

DRAPERY, STORES table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

HOTELS, CATERERS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

INDUSTRIALS A-D table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

INDUSTRIALS E-K table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

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S-Z table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

INSURANCE table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

LEISURE table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

MINING table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

MOTORS, AIRCRAFT table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

NEWSPAPERS, PUBLISHERS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

OLDS, GAS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

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TEXTILES table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

TOBACCO table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

OVERSEAS TRADERS table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

PAPER, PRINT, ADVERTISING table with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, Change, and %.

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Small losses

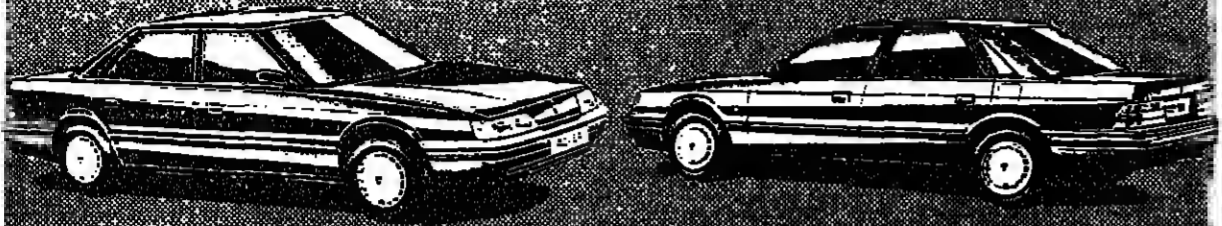
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Motoring by Clifford Webb

Mazda's advantage on all fours

When I drove the new Honda Prelude 2.0i-16 with its controversial four-wheel steering...



Technology on the move: the Mazda 626 GT 4WS, sure-footed and with a host of extras

It shows appreciable all-round advantages over conventional two-wheel steering. That lives the would-be buyer...

It is even more confusing in Mazda's case because it has chosen to launch 4WS here on the five-door 'family' version of the 626...

steer is controlled by a combination of front-wheel angle and car speed. On the road I found the Mazda's sharper response to the steering wheel...

steer is controlled by a combination of front-wheel angle and car speed. On the road I found the Mazda's sharper response to the steering wheel...

It is understandable from a motorist's point of view that we have to try through the nose for invention.

Lining up a battle of the hitches

The bats for the big selling Escort-Golf sector of the market is lining up with this week's news from Renault that it is replacing the ageing R9/11 iuge with the brand new R11



Fighting with the middleweight heavies: the all-new Renault 19 in five-door hatchback form

It goes on sale in France in September and should reach Britain by early next year.

Energy unit manufactured in Spain and designed to run on unleaded petrol.

Its capacity ranges from 1000 to 1400cc. Also new is a 16-valve 1764cc engine developing 140bhp and a 1870cc diesel.

Renault has had some hard knocks lately and is looking to the R11 to restore its fortunes.

Some four inches longer than the car it replaces, the R19 is claimed to be more aerodynamically slippery than its rivals...

One of them is already checkable - competitive prices. The base model Type 1 will cost only £7,150, 1.4DGT £7,740, 1.6DGT £8,090, 1.6DGT SX £8,550 and a 1.9 Turbo Diesel £9,990.

An indication of the importance it attaches to the new model is that from day one it will be sold in 27 versions and ultimately there will be 7. By then, the range will comprise 16 engine options, five and five-door hatchbacks and four levels of equipment.

There are three new engines, including a so-called 'petrol'.

Standard equipment includes five-speed gearbox, rear wash-wipe, low-profile tyres, split folding rear seats and stereo radio-cassette with four speakers.

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Arrival of a rival

When the Renault 19 reaches the British market next year, it will find one of its toughest rivals already established. Fiat's new Tipo goes on sale here next week, making similar claims of cost and technical ability.

One of them is already checkable - competitive prices. The base model Type 1 will cost only £7,150, 1.4DGT £7,740, 1.6DGT £8,090, 1.6DGT SX £8,550 and a 1.9 Turbo Diesel £9,990.

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Continued on page 30

Surety for rent liable to assignee

F & A Swift Investments (a Firm) v Combined English Stores Group plc. Before Lord Keith of Kinkaid, Lord Roskill, Lord Templeman, Lord Ackner and Lord Oliver of Aylmerton. [Speeches July 7]

LORD OLIVER said that the appeal raised the much debated question whether the benefit of a covenant by a surety for the performance of a lease was capable of running with the reversion so as to be available without express assignment to the successor in title of the original landlord.

The appellant did not contain any specific assignment of the benefit of the surety's covenant. The underlease failed to pay the rent due under the underlease for several months and then went into creditors' voluntary winding up. The defendant had not paid the outstanding rent although called upon to do so.

The relationship between the landlord and a surety was contractual only. The surety had no interest in the land demised and there was thus no privity of estate.

In seeking to enforce the surety's covenant an assignee of the reversion could not rely upon the Grantee of Reversions Act 1840, the provisions of which were substantially re-enacted in section 141 of the Law of Property Act 1925 and which applied only to covenants between landlord and tenant.

His claim to enforce rested upon the common law rule, under which the benefit of the covenant would run with the land if, but only if, the assignee had the legal estate in the land and the covenant was one which "touch and concern" the land.

In his Lordship's opinion the question of whether a surety's covenant in a lease touched and concerned the land fell to be determined by the same test as that applicable to the tenant's covenant.

The House of Lords was content to accept the analysis and conclusion of Sir Nicolas Browne-Wilkinson, Vice-Chancellor, in Kumar v Dunning that the correct principle was that pronounced by Mr Justice Best in Vyvyan v Arthur (1823) 1 B & C 410, 417 and approved by the House of Lords in Dyson v Foster (1909) AC 93.

Continental breakfast is 'board'

Offer v Norman. Before Lord Bridge of Harwich, Lord Brandon of Oakbrook, Lord Templeman, Lord Ackner and Lord Oliver of Aylmerton. [Speeches July 7]

No question was raised as to the bona fides of the letting at a rent which included payments for that daily meal. The sole question was whether it amounted to a "board" under section 7(1) of the Rent Act 1977 so as to defeat the tenant's claim to a protected tenancy.

The House of Lords held in dismissing an appeal by tenant Mr Gerard Norman, from the dismissal by the Court of Appeal (Lord Justice May and Mr Justice Waterhouse). (The Times August 3, 1987; 1988) 2 WLR 250 of his appeal from an order of West London County Court (Mr Assistant Registrar J. W. Burnett, QC) granting possession of the room of which he was the tenant to the landlord, Mr Charles Otter.

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Licensed conveyancers tribunal is entitled to expect high standards of conduct

Hewell Council of Licensed Conveyancers. Before Lord Justice Watkins and Mr Justice Macpherson. [Judgment July 7]

The Discipline and Appeals Committee of the Council for Licensed Conveyancers was entitled to uphold high standards of conduct in order to preserve the confidence of the public.

In 1983 and 1984 the appellant was employed as a solicitor's clerk. Unfortunately his principal became disreputable and abused the trust reposed in him as a solicitor and set about defrauding banks. He was assisted to some degree by the appellant.

When the appellant was convicted of three offences of falsifying accounts and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, suspended for two years.

MR JUSTICE MACPHERSON, concurring, said that in his view a solicitor (1956) 1 WLR 1312 Lord Goddard, Lord Chief Justice, had expressed the view that the disciplinary committee of the Law Society was right to act to maintain the confidence of the public.

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Justices disqualified themselves in delay

Regina v Trafford Magistrates Court, Ex parte Stott. Before Lord Justice Taylor and Mr Justice McCowan. [Judgment July 1]

The original bench were still seized of the matter and invited the justices to adjourn the case for the original bench to resume the resumed hearing.

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ATHLETICS: THE TALENT ON DISPLAY IN TONIGHT'S PEUGEOT EVENT AT CRYSTAL PALACE GIVES THE VENUE AN ATMOSPHERE TO RIVAL THE BISLETT GAMES

Cram's repeat duel the highlight in a meeting of quality

By Pat Butcher, Athletics Correspondent

After a late start in assembling tonight's fields, and then some dissembling about who offered what to whom in the case of Tessa Sanderson versus the administration paymasters, tonight's Peugeot meeting at Crystal Palace looks like offering something close to the heady delights of last Saturday's Oslo meeting.

Steve Cram's win in the Dream Mile over Abel Bile and Peter Elliott has restored his confidence such that he is willing to let the pair have another go at him in tonight's 1,000 metres.

Sebastian Coe continues his rehabilitation after injury last year with another 800 metres, prior to his 1,500 metres in Dublin next Tuesday. And his experience should be too much for the newcomers, Ibrahim Okash and Paul Ereng.

Who earns what in the field of 'amateurs'

Tessa Sanderson's argument over match fees has brought into focus the money that amateur athletes (Pat Butcher writes). Sanderson was doing £4,000 but demanded £7,000. When a compromise could not be reached, her withdrawal was announced.

Most organizers, but especially the British, are loath to reveal figures, for reasons best known to their accountants. But the £20,000 prize on offer is the highest ever for a 100m race.

Linford Christie measures his form and confidence against Chidi Ino in the 100 metres. And John Regis and Colin Jackson should win the 200 metres and high hurdles.



Elliott enough confidence to take on Cram and Bile again over 1,000 metres

Nomadic Larkins seeks Seoul as a destination

By Pat Butcher

The life of a top-class athlete tends to be fairly nomadic nowadays. But Paul Larkins has raised it to an art-form, gypsying back and forth across the Atlantic and Baltic from his parents' home at Folkestone, splitting the year so far in New Zealand, Oklahoma and his present base in Helsinki.

His task now is to get among the best three at the distance, with a view to making the British Olympic team. That would be a major coup, considering the opposition - Steve Cram, Sebastian Coe, Peter Elliott, Steve Cramb, among others.

BOWLS

Scots stir halcyon memories

By David Rhys Jones

Scotland opened up an early lead, and held on to it comfortably to defeat England, the reigning champions, in the NatWest Home International series at Larne, Northern Ireland, yesterday.

GOLF: DOUBLY MEMORABLE DAY FOR CHALLENGER IN SCOTTISH OPEN

Bennett's late swoop on wings of eagle

By Mitchell Platts, Golf Correspondent

Stephen Bennett launched an unlikely challenge for the Bell's Scottish Open when he followed an eagle at the 14th with four successive birdies to complete a second round of 65 on the King's course at Glengolies, Hove, yesterday.

Table with 4 columns: Hole, Yds, Par, Score. Card of course for Stephen Bennett.

Smith shrugs off rain to set a course record

By a Special Correspondent

Mike Smith, from Brokenhurst Manor, set a course record of four-under-par 68 in yesterday's second stroke-play qualifying round to secure England's place in the second round of the 1988 British Open.

EQUESTRIANISM

Edgar regains title after 24 years

By Jenny MacArthur

Liz Edgar yesterday reclaimed the British Show Jumping Association's national title after a 24-year interval.

BOXING

Nelson's eye on McGuigan

By Srikanth Sen, Boxing Correspondent

There was a whiff of the be-away-with-it blarney about Azumah Nelson's press conference in London yesterday when the World Boxing Council super-featherweight champion called for a rematch with Barry McGuigan.

Accuracy of Evans earns title

By Gordon Allan

Arnette Evans, of Willow Bank, the oldest bowling club in Glasgow (constituted in 1835), won the British Isles women's singles championship at Spennymoor yesterday.

SPORTS SPONSORSHIP

Snooker still top but viewing figures fall

By John Goodbody

Snooker has declined in popularity over the last few years, but remains the dominant sport for the television viewer.

FOR THE RECORD

- ATHLETICS: Alderson's team Services Championship... GOLF: Coventry Hennessy Cognac national regional final... SHOOTING: ISSLEY: Queen's Medal Services competition... TENNIS: Bournemouth: Challenger Insurance tournament... BASEBALL: North America: American League Cleveland Indians...

TODAY'S FIXTURES

- CRICKET: NatWest Trophy Second Round 10.30, to lunch... EQUINE: Polk Peck dressage international (Goodwood), Norwich Union trials (Sandringham)... BASEBALL: 1988 ITV 4 TV, tomorrow: Mercedes (Sandringham)...

Scotland also won the fours when a rain from Carnwarth, Lanarkshire, stopped by Marjorie Shearer, beat Mary Hughes's Welsh team from Skewen 20-15.

Interviews were carried out in February 1988 - the first season for snooker and football since the report, which says that the snooker and football figures were slightly inflated.

But Fiona Mulliner, product group manager for Snooker, says "Sponsorship is being far more targeted on certain groups and also is becoming more experimental."

BARCELONA: IRVU Youth Championship... YACHTING: BARCELONA: IRVU Youth Championship... BASEBALL: NORTH AMERICA: American League Cleveland Indians...

The game in crisis goes on the spree

By Stuart Jones
Football Correspondent
The transfer market is threatening once more to run dangerously out of control and strain still further the credibility of English football.

Such payments, particularly for players yet to be fully established, promise to have an effect even more damaging than in 1979. Nottingham Forest then broke the £1 million barrier by buying Trevor Francis (who had been capped a dozen times) and the total sales for the season eventually amounted to £43 million.

trend of increasing attendances. Crowds have risen over the last two seasons.
Gordon Taylor, secretary of the Professional Footballers' Association, is worried that "the market could crash again. Spectators are the lifeblood of the game. They bring in £50 million a year and the membership scheme will reduce that sum. It will be very hard to maintain the income to pay such prices."

Minister, no doubt, will have the impression that football is overflowing with money. The fact is that the vast majority of clubs will find it extremely difficult to implement high technology membership systems."
Taylor appreciates that the leading five clubs (Arsenal, Everton, Liverpool, Manchester United and Tottenham) dictate the prices in the free market. Although the Football League attempted to halt the spiral in 1983 by ordering that half of a transfer fee should be paid immediately and the balance within 12 months, it has become, in his words, "a vicious circle."

HOW TRANSFER FEES ARE RISING

Table with columns: Name, From, To, Fee. Lists top eight transfers from April 1, 1988, to mid-July, including Paul Gascoigne (£2,000,000) and Stuart Pearce (£1,500,000).

These are the top eight transfers from April 1, 1987, to mid-July (caps correct at time of transfer)

Table with columns: Name, From, To, Fee. Lists top eight transfers from April 1, 1987, to mid-July, including Peter Beardsley (£1,500,000) and John Barnes (£900,000).

Government preparing way for card scheme

By John Goodbody
The Government yesterday began preparing to carry out its national identity card scheme for all football spectators, ordered by the Prime Minister at the Downing Street meeting with the game's authorities.

the financial outlay for an efficient identity card plan was well within the game's financial resources, particularly when there are immense marketing possibilities in such a scheme.

who does not possess the card to which he is entitled could be banned from attending games. This would also apply to the person who lent the card.

If a person has his or her card stolen or loses the identification, then its facilities can be immediately cancelled, as with an ordinary credit card after a loss is reported. All clubs would be linked with a central computer and segregation of fans could be aided because access to certain parts of the ground could be easily blocked off.

Hick banks Trophy century



Virtuoso performer, Hick, the Worcestershire batsman, pulls a ball for four on his way to a century in the NatWest Trophy match yesterday against Nottinghamshire. Report, page 34

Plan receives cool reception

Philip Carter, chairman of the Football League, gave the Government's anti-hooligan plan a cool reception (Steve Acteson writes). He said: "In view of the fact that crowd control at grounds has improved over the last two or three seasons, we are of the opinion that a national membership scheme would not be addressing the right problem. The problem now is outside grounds and if the

Government wants to tackle that, we will be happy to participate.
Graham Kelly, the League secretary, said: "Although we have been happy to co-operate with the Sports Minister's working party, we are reluctant to implement a national membership scheme bearing in mind the financial implications this would place on smaller clubs."

Manchester City, voiced what he believed to be the consensus of the 92 League clubs when he spoke out against the Government plan to introduce a national membership scheme with identity cards.

The clubs will also have the facility to use the information in the computer on card-holders for marketing, issuing information and the distribution of tickets for special events, such as the FA Cup final: the computer will be able to list exactly how many matches an individual has attended during a season.

Wembley gets the go-ahead

By Steve Acteson
Wembley's international four-clubs tournament was re-instated yesterday after some tough talking, a hint of legal action and criticism as expressed in The Times. The Football Association lifted its ban on the tournament, and it will go ahead, as planned, on the weekend of August 13 and 14, with Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal, Bayern Munich and AC Milan. Wembley is planning a maximum 66,000 all-seated crowd to reduce the risk of hooliganism.

Milan are expected to include Ruud Gullit, Marco van Basten and Frank Rijkaard, from the Netherlands team which won the European Championship. Bayern will field Johnny Ekstrom, the Swedish international forward, and a quartet of West German internationals.

Some stiff opposition from other top clubs and that, in itself, is a triumph," he said.

More heavy morning rain delayed the start until 2.30. Hampshire had been left at Wednesday's close with nine wickets standing and 41 overs in which to make another 186 to win, and quite soon after yesterday's resumption Chris Smith was sent back by Nicholas, slipped and pulled a hamstring, who be asked for, and was allowed, a runner.

Gascoigne signing sets British record

By Steve Acteson
Tottenham Hotspur yesterday officially confirmed the signing of midfielder Paul Gascoigne, from Newcastle United, for £2 million, a British transfer record.

Gascoigne, aged 21, has signed a five-year contract reported to be worth around £1 million to the player. His capture follows the signing, only three weeks earlier, of Paul Stewart, another England under-21 player, from Manchester City for £1.5 million.

Venables was predictably delighted over his latest coup yesterday, particularly as he had had to beat off some severe opposition, most notably from Manchester United.

On his way to victory, Hampshire took a long time accelerating. When Nicholas was out in the 34th over they were 80 for two, and having a job to get on top, and certainly the running between the wickets was to play a considerable part in their doing so. Robin Smith being, like Terry, a flyer. By the start of the last 20

Roebuck jumps in to take issue with Terry the hare

By John Woodcock
completed his stroke. At 135 for two by which time Terry had been out there for 18 overs. Roebuck made an issue of it which seemed perfectly fair if he was convinced of his case, as I am sure he was.

England call off visit to Sri Lanka

England's tour of Sri Lanka in the autumn has been called off for safety reasons (Alan Lee writes). A statement from Lord's yesterday spoke of "an element of risk we cannot prudently ignore."

Greenidge in hospital

Gordon Greenidge, the West Indies' vice-captain is recuperating in a private hospital in Manchester after being taken seriously ill soon after the end of the Old Trafford Test match on Tuesday (Alan Lee writes).

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END COLUMN

Ferrari lure too great for Mansell

By John Hines
It is sad when Britain's most successful grand prix driver has to leave a "home" team, especially one as fervently patriotic as Williams in order to drive for "the opposition". But who in his right mind would criticise Nigel Mansell for grasping the offer made to him - for the second time in as many years and in the region of £4 million - by Ferrari?

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